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*John James Macgregor.*

*Author of the History of the French Revolution.*

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# LIVES

OF

ILLUSTRIOUS AND DISTINGUISHED

## IRISHMEN,

FROM

THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT PERIOD,

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER,

AND EMBODYING A

HISTORY OF IRELAND IN THE LIVES OF IRISHMEN.

EDITED BY

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Author of *Letters on the Philosophy of Unbelief*, &c., &c., &c.

EMBELLISHED BY A SERIES OF HIGHLY-FINISHED PORTRAITS, SELECTED FROM  
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*Bartholomew*

*Bartholomew*









The Hon<sup>ble</sup> John Fortescue Esq<sup>r</sup> of  
Lancaster House London

Received of the Hon<sup>ble</sup> John Fortescue Esq<sup>r</sup> the sum of





*Adam Clarke. D.D. F.R.S.*



# LIVES

OF

## ILLUSTRIOUS AND DISTINGUISHED IRISHMEN.

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### **George Berkeley, D.D., Bishop of Cloyne.**

BORN, A. D. 1684.—DIED, A. D. 1753.

GEORGE BERKELEY was the son of William Berkeley, of Kilerin, near Thomastown, in the county of Kilkenny—the county of Flood, Langrishe, Bushe, and other names not to be forgotten in the roll of honour. He was born, March 12, 1684.

We are not enabled to give any detail of the history of his ancestors. It is mentioned in the memorial written by Dr Stock, and appended to the collection of his writings, that his grandfather came over to Ireland after the restoration, his family having been great sufferers, for their loyalty, in the civil wars; and that he “obtained the collectorship of Belfast.” His ancestor is elsewhere mentioned as a younger branch of the earls of Berkeley.

Berkeley received the first part of his education at Kilkenny school, from which so many scholars of the first eminence have come. Of the peculiar indications of his schoolboy years, no notice has been preserved. He entered as a pensioner in the University of Dublin, in his fifteenth year, under the tuition of Dr Hall; and in 1707, when about twenty-three, he obtained a fellowship. The same year he published an essay on mathematical science, which had been written before he was twenty, and was probably the fruit of his studies for the fellowship. This was an attempt to demonstrate arithmetic without algebra or Euclid. As we intend to conclude this memoir with a distinct notice of his writings, we shall only here observe the evidence which such an attempt contains of a moral feature in his character, which, we are fully convinced, had a very considerable effect in determining the nature of all his writings, and some parts, at least, of his conduct: this was a freedom from the influence thrown over the mind by the settled conventions of human opinion, and a consequent disposition to take novel and eccentric courses, at the real or apparent dictate of reason or duty,—a temper, of which one of the results was, a very unusual simplicity and singleness of character;



another, a boldness equally remarkable, though we think far less fortunate, in the highly adventurous career of his philosophy.

His Theory of Vision came out in 1709, and the Principles of Human Knowledge, which gave the ultimate stamp to his philosophical character, in the following year. In 1712, he was induced to enter upon the discussion of those questions of political theory, which then mainly interested the public. The reader is already aware of the connexion of the questions upon the rights of kings, and the doctrine of passive obedience, with the history of the revolution which placed the family of Hanover on the British throne. Locke's celebrated treatise turned the attention of Berkeley to the controversy, on which he delivered three commonplaces, in the college chapel: these he afterwards printed; and as he undertook to maintain the exploded doctrine, which was supposed to be connected with adherence to the banished family of the Stuart princes, he was afterwards represented as a Jacobite, by Lord Galway, when recommended to him for preferment, by the prince and princess of Wales. Mr Molyneux, who had been Berkeley's pupil in college, and had introduced him to these royal personages, took care to remove the impression, by showing, from the work, that the principles of the writer were thoroughly loyal.

His system of materialism, as a matter of course, attracted a very high degree of attention among that class of persons who delight in the barren perplexities of metaphysics. The controversial opposition which it excited was more shown in the general opposition of eminent men, such as Whiston, Clarke, and others, than by any express attempts at refutation. Of this, the following extract from Whiston's memoir of Clarke may give a notion sufficient for our present purpose:—"And perhaps it will not be here improper, by way of caution, to take notice of the pernicious consequence such metaphysical subtilties have sometimes had, even against common sense, and common experience, as in the cases of those three famous men, Mons. Leibnitz, Mr Locke, and Mr Berkeley.—(The first, in his pre-established Harmony; the second, in the dispute with Limborch about human liberty.) And as to the third named, Mr Berkeley, he published, A.D. 1710, at Dublin, the metaphysic notion, that *matter* was not a *real thing*; nay, that the common opinion of its *reality* was groundless, if not ridiculous. He was pleased to send Dr Clarke and myself, each of us, a book. After we had both perused it, I went to Dr Clarke, and discoursed with him about it to this effect,—that I, being not a metaphysician, was not able to answer Mr Berkeley's subtile *premises*, though I did not at all believe his absurd *conclusion*. I, therefore, desired that he who was deep in such subtilties, but did not appear to believe Mr Berkeley's conclusion, would answer him,—which task he declined. I speak not these things with intention to reproach either Mr Locke or dean Berkeley. I own the latter's great abilities in other parts of learning; and to his noble design of settling a college in, or near the West Indies, for the instruction of natives in civil arts, and in the principles of christianity, I heartily wish all possible success. It is the pretended metaphysic science itself, derived from the sceptical disputes of the Greek philosophers, not those particular great men who

have been, unhappily, imposed on by it, that I complain of. Accordingly, when the famous Milton had a mind to represent the vain reasonings of wicked spirits in Hades, he described it by their endless train of metaphysics, thus :—

“ Others apart sat on a hill retired,” &c.—*Par. Lost.* ii. 557—561.

“Many years after this, at Mr Addison’s instance, there was a meeting of Drs Clarke and Berkeley to discuss this speculative point; and great hopes were entertained from the conference. The parties, however, separated without being able to come to any agreement. Dr B. declared himself not well satisfied with the conduct of his antagonist on the occasion, who, though he could not answer, had not candour enough to own himself convinced. But the complaints of disputants against each other, especially on subjects of this abstruse nature, should be heard with suspicion.”

In 1713, he went over to London, and there published a defence of his philosophical theory, in “Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous.” The ingenuity and the singular acuteness of intellect displayed in these writings attracted the admiration of scholars and literary men; and his acquaintance was sought and cultivated by the most distinguished persons of the time; Steele and Swift, especially the latter, were active in introducing him to those who might be serviceable to his advancement. Steele employed him to write several papers in the *Guardian*, for each of which he is said to have given him a guinea and a dinner. At Steele’s house he frequently met Pope, and formed an intimacy with him, which grew into a lasting friendship. He was introduced to the celebrated earl of Peterborough, by Swift, whose influence with this nobleman was very great. At his instance, the earl took Berkeley with him, as chaplain and secretary, when, towards the end of the same year, he was appointed ambassador to the king of Sicily, and the other Italian states.

He was left for three months at Leghorn, by the earl, while he went on by himself, to Sicily, to discharge the functions of his embassy. During his absence, a really trifling incident gave Berkeley a fright, to which he was afterwards used to revert with pleasantry, among his friends. At that period, it is stated, by Dr Clarke, that the only place in Italy where the service of the protestant church was tolerated, was at Leghorn—a favour then recently obtained by queen Anne from the grand duke. It happened that Dr Kennett, chaplain to the English factory, asked Berkeley to preach for him one Sunday. Berkeley complied with the request. On the next day, as he was sitting alone in his chamber, he was surprised and startled by the apparition of a train of surpliced priests, who entered his apartment in ghostly array, and walked round, muttering some form of prayer or exorcism, without seeming to notice his presence in any way, and then walked out again. Berkeley’s first apprehensions suggested some connexion between this solemn visitation and his sermon of the previous day: it could be, he thought, nothing less than some demonstration from the inquisition, which must have been informed that he had preached without license to a heretical congregation. When he

recovered from his astonishment, he made cautious inquiries, and, to his great relief, learned that it was the solemn festival set apart for blessing the houses of all "good catholics" from rats and vermin.

In 1714, he returned with lord Peterborough to England. The fall of the tory party appeared to terminate all immediate prospects of preferment; he was, therefore, not dissatisfied at the occurrence of a favourable opportunity to extend his travels. The bishop of Clogher, Dr St George Ashe, proposed to him to accompany his son who was heir to a good property, on a tour through Europe.

His stay at Paris is rendered memorable by an incident of some interest, his interview with the celebrated philosopher Malebranche, of which, we have to regret, that no detailed account remains. Malebranche was prominent among the great speculative inquirers of his age, and held opinions very nearly approaching those of Berkeley's theory. His opinion that all our volitions and perceptions are produced by the immediate operation of the divine will working on the frame, appears by a brief and very obvious train to lead to the inferences of the non-existence of external things. From this not very sane result, the French philosopher was deterred by an argument which should have had a similar influence on Berkeley, whose theory was invented with a direct view to oppose a scepticism fashionable in his day. Malebranche justly considered the existence of the external world to be affirmed in the beginning of Genesis, and, therefore, concluded that the inferences of speculation could not be carried so far as to deny it: although it is clear he removed all evidence for it but that supplied by scripture. When Berkeley paid him a visit, he was labouring under an inflammation of the lungs; and, at the moment, engaged in the preparation of some medicine, which he was watching as it heated in a small pipkin on his fire. It was an unfortunate situation for the encounter of two philosophers, who had such a point of difference to contend for. Malebranche had become acquainted with Berkeley's theory of the non-existence of the external world; and immediately entered, with all the interest of a philosopher, and all the impetuosity of a Frenchman, into a discussion upon it. Berkeley was soon heated with controversial ardour; and they who best know the zeal of metaphysical disputation, will not hesitate to admit the probability, that the trifling considerations of form and circumstance must soon have been forgotten by both parties in the keen debate. The actual incidents are no further known than by the event. The French philosopher spoke so much and so loud, that it brought on a violent increase of his disorder, which carried him off in a few days.

Upwards of four years were, at this period, spent in travelling among other places, less upon the common track of tourists: he travelled over Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily. He had collected materials for a natural history of Sicily; but they were unfortunately lost in the passage to Naples. Some very curious and interesting sketches of his visit to Ischia, in the bay of Naples, and a description of an eruption of Vesuvius, which he witnessed, and was enabled to observe very accurately, have caused his biographer to regret this loss as an injury to the "literary world." And notwithstanding the bright reflection which Berkeley's fame, as a metaphysical writer, throws on his country,



and still more on his university, we are rather inclined to regret that his genius had not earlier received a direction favourable to the exercise of talents with which he was pre-eminently endowed by nature. The world might have spared those writings which have in no way contributed to human wisdom, and are rather to be regarded as essays and examples of high intellectual power, than as leading to results, with perhaps one slight exception, which it will be time enough to notice when we come to the separate consideration of his writings. There is a remarkable freshness, vigour, and graphic power about his descriptions of places, and an inquisitiveness of research, which would, with the addition of his profound intelligence, have given to the world the most instructive and delightful history of the nature and social peculiarities of the countries and people whom he visited. From the habitual intercourse with realities, his understanding would have acquired a practical turn, the want of which was his main defect, and with his universally accomplished, exploring, and enthusiastic mind, he would have been the Humboldt of his age. There is a singular combination of poetic effect and of accurate observation, in his description of the island of Inarime, and still more of its ancient mountain, Mons Epomeus, rising from its centre, and overlooking the scenery of the *Æneid*—"from the promontory of Antium to the cape of Palinurus." Though we are amused with the enthusiastic simplicity which, after describing the Arcadian innocence and simplicity of the inhabitants, who, as they "are without riches and honours, so they are without the vices and follies that attend them;" in the very next sentence he informs us, that "they have got, as an alloy to their happiness, an ill habit of murdering one another, on slight offences." One is apt to suspect that the philosopher had in his mind the *Arcades ambo* of Horace, rather than the "poetical notions of the golden age;" but Berkeley's mind is too earnest and high-wrought for the frivolity of a joke: he immediately after tells his correspondent that "by the sole secret of minding our own business, we found a means of living safely among this dangerous people,"—a lesson which he might have easily learned at home. Still more full of interest must have been his descriptions of mount Vesuvius: in his letter to Arbuthnot, in which he describes three ascents, he says, of the first, "With much difficulty I reached the top of mount Vesuvius, in which I saw a vast aperture full of smoke, which hindered the seeing its depth and figure. I heard within that horrid gulf certain odd sounds, which seemed to proceed from the belly of the mountain; a sort of murmuring, sighing, throbbing, churning, dashing, as it were, of waves, and, between whiles, a noise like that of thunder, or cannon, which was constantly attended with a clattering like that of tiles falling from the tops of houses on the streets," &c. On this ascent he obtained but imperfect and occasional glimpses of the awful doings below, in that vast and hollow gulf: a momentary dispersion of the smoke displayed two furnaces, almost contiguous, throwing up a "very ruddy flame," and vast discharges of red hot stones. On the eighth of May he ascended a second time, and saw a different aspect of things: the air was calm, and a column of smoke ascended straight up, so as to leave clearly visible the boiling and bellowing chasm beneath, in which the two furnaces

burned more fiercely than on the former day, "throwing up every three or four minutes, with a dreadful bellowing, a vast number of red hot stones—sometimes, in appearance, about a thousand—and at least three thousand feet higher than my head, as I stood upon the brink." The other furnace was equally remarkable, in a different way, being "filled with red hot liquid matter, like that in the furnace of a glass-house, which raged and wrought as the waves of the sea, causing a short abrupt noise, like what may be imagined to proceed from a sea of quicksilver dashing among uneven rocks." Between this ascent and the twentieth of June, he continued to make excursions in the vicinity, during which he continued to observe with interest the varying appearances of the mountain—sometimes pouring from its summit bright and glittering streams of liquid lava—of which the burning course was traceable by the "ruddy smoke" which overhung it "along a huge track of sky." On other nights, a tall column of flame shot up the heavens, from the smoky height, and disappeared in sudden darkness, after a moment, as if "the jaws of darkness had devoured it." But on the tenth the scene appears to have put on all its terrors to attract the imaginative philosopher: he describes its distant sound to his friend:—"You cannot form a juster idea of this noise, in the most violent fits of it, than by imagining a mixed sound made up of the raging of a tempest, the murmur of a troubled sea, and the roaring of thunder and artillery all together. It was very terrible, as we heard it in the further end of Naples, at the distance of above twelve miles: this moved my curiosity to approach the mountain. Three or four of us got into a boat, and were set ashore at Torre del Greco, a town situate at the foot of Vesuvius, to the south-west, whence we rode four or five miles before we came to the burning river, which was about midnight. The roaring of the volcano grew exceeding loud and horrible as we approached. I observed a mixture of colours in the cloud over the crater,—green, yellow, red, and blue; there was, likewise, a ruddy dismal light in the air over that tract of land where the burning river flowed; ashes continually showered on us all the way from the seacoast; all which circumstances, set off, and, augmented by the horror and silence of the night, made a scene the most uncommon and astonishing I ever saw, which grew still more extraordinary as we came nearer the stream. Imagine a vast torrent of liquid fire rolling from the top down the side of the mountain, and, with irresistible fury, bearing down and consuming vines, olives, fig-trees, and houses; in a word, everything that stood in its way. This mighty flood divided into different channels, according to the inequalities of the mountain; the largest stream seemed half-a-mile broad at least, and five miles long. The nature and consistence of these burning torrents have been described with so much exactness and truth, by Borellus, in his Latin treatise of mount *Ætna*, that I need say nothing of it. I walked so far before my companions up the mountain, along the side of the river of fire, that I was obliged to return in great haste, the sulphureous stream having surprised me, and almost taken away my breath. During our return, which was about three o'clock in the morning, we constantly heard the murmur and groaning of the mountain, which between whiles would burst out into louder peals,

throwing up huge spouts of fire and burning stones, which, falling down again, resembled the stars in our rockets. Sometimes I observed two, at others three distinct columns of flames; and sometimes one vast one, that seemed to fill the whole crater. These burning columns, and the fiery stones, seemed to be shot one thousand feet perpendicular above the summit of the volcano." The eruption continued, with various changes of appearance, until the eighteenth, during which he continued to watch it with unwearied interest, and to note every incident that occurred. As may be anticipated, he formed a theory to account for volcanoes. He supposed a vacuum to be made in the "bowels of the earth, by a vast body of inflammable matter taking fire, the water rushed in and was converted into steam; which simple cause was sufficient to produce all the wonderful effects of volcanoes—as appears from Savery's fire-engine for raising water, and from the *Æolipile*.\* We believe the great question, thus hastily solved, remains yet to exercise the research and skill of geologists—Whether the volcanic elements are directly thrown from the great reservoir of molten elements far down towards the mass of central heat—or the infusion of water upon some local accumulation of similar materials, is not, and perhaps cannot, be ascertained with the certainty of science. Nor can we here dwell upon a question so far beyond our knowledge.

On his return to England, Berkeley composed, at Lyons, an essay upon a question proposed by the Royal Academy of Paris. The subject was on the principle and cause of motion; the tract is in Latin in his works: he published it on his arrival in London in 1721. In this tract, he arrives with infinite art at the same conclusion which he had already put forth in his great metaphysical theory.† As we propose to give the reader a full account of this, it will be unnecessary to anticipate it here.

From such speculations he was happily diverted, from time to time; and at last altogether, by the active benevolence of his disposition. In 1720, the country sustained great suffering from the South Sea scheme. Berkeley wrote and published a tract, in which he endeavours to point out the sources of the national suffering and its remedies. His discourse displays all the character of a humane and elevated spirit, with much sound thinking on the general principles of social welfare. There is, at the same time, perceptible in it, a tone of observation remote from the actual temper of human life, and a want of perception of the more detailed workings of society—he soars in a lofty region of primary truths and general principles, and seems to consider a great moral reform, and something like a system of sumptuary regulations, to be the great remedy for the existing evils. And there can, indeed, be little doubt of the vast accumulation of evils which arise in the social system, from the intemperance, profligacy, luxury, irreligion, and immorality; or, in one word, the corruption of society: nor can we hesitate to agree with Berkeley, that the most beneficial changes would be the result of a great and general reform. But such statements have small weight upon the foaming torrent of life; and this can only

\* Clarke's note.

† See from sect. 34 to the end.—Works, 8vo., vol. ii. p. 385.



be derived from a cautious, close, and specific method of application, which, having laid down general maxims, pursues them with a view to the practical and possible. Yet, in a moment of nearly unexampled suffering and terror, it may be assumed, that the national spirit might be more than usually alive to those impressions which are mostly so difficult to convey. That a sober and moral tone of public feeling, and, still more, a due sense of Christianity, from which such impressions have their best and most legitimate source, ought to have the good effects implied by Berkeley, we have no doubt,—but such impressions are the slow growth of time, and only to be developed from the fullest practical operation of the cause itself. No reasoning from consequences is, under any circumstances, likely to have any effect. No one will mend his ways because the nation might be improved by a general reform. All such expedients begin at the wrong end.

Shortly after his return, Berkeley was introduced by Pope to the accomplished earl of Burlington, whose name is so familiar to the architectural student. Berkeley had himself cultivated this art, and, during his travels, had become extensively and accurately acquainted with the best existing specimens, ancient and modern. His knowledge of the subject, set off as it must have been by his discursive talent and his ingenuity and enthusiasm, attracted the admiration of the noble earl, who introduced him with strong encomiums to the duke of Grafton, then about to come over as lord-lieutenant to Ireland. The duke took him with him, as chaplain, in 1721, when he had been six years away from his native country. He had, in the mean time, become a senior fellow, and now took his degree of doctor in divinity, November 14.

In the next year he obtained a large bequest from Mrs Hester Vanhomrigh, amounting to about £4,000. We have already had to state the particulars in our memoir of Swift. It is asserted, on good authority, that he had only once met this unfortunate lady at dinner. But he must have been well known to her by reputation; and, besides, the high admiration which his singularly pure character was likely to make on one so alive to impressions, many influential causes were not unlikely to have intervened, though of so slight a nature, as to leave no record.

In 1724 he was preferred by the duke of Grafton to the deanery of Derry, on which he resigned his fellowship. The deanery was worth £1,100 a-year; but the heart of Berkeley was high above the lower influences of life. The same spirit which impressed him with a notion that the state of the nation might be bettered by lofty expositions of general truths, operated on him as a governing influence. While he had been on his travels, his imagination had been captivated by the splendour and beauty of foreign scenery,—with which he naturally associated visions of human happiness. The notion of a purer and better form of society, founded on the perfect basis of Christianity, was a natural fruit of such a mind, and it became his favourite project. For him, the factitious splendour and the enervating luxury—the pomp and vanity, which are so much of life to common minds, were utterly devoid of charms—in these there was nothing to resign. A course of conduct, hard to the conception of ordinary mortals, was, with these



dispositions, natural; his heart, in which no sordid feeling had place, was filled with the lofty and holy design of "converting the savage Americans to Christianity, by a college to be erected in the Summer Islands, otherwise called the isles of Bermuda." We shall offer no extracts from the proposal which he published on the occasion; because, as was to be expected from one of his earnest and sincere temper, the reasons, which he would himself feel the weight of, are all obvious enough. It is not until a man doubts the efficacy of the main reasons, that he will think it necessary to look for new and deep arguments for the recommendation of good deeds. A poem, otherwise of no value, will offer some view of the impressions of his own mind.

The muse, disgusted at an age and clime,  
Barren of every glorious theme,  
In distant lands now waits a better time,  
Producing subjects worthy fame.

In happy climes where, from the genial sun  
And virgin earth, such scenes ensue,  
The force of art, by nature seems outdone,  
And fancied beauties by the true.

In happy climes—the seat of innocence,  
Where nature guides, and virtue rules;  
Where man shall not impose, for truth and sense,  
The pedantry of courts and schools.

There shall be sung another golden age,  
The rise of empire and of arts,  
The good and great inspiring epic rage  
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

Not such as Europe breeds in her decay,  
Such as she bred when fresh and young,  
When heavenly flame did animate her clay,  
By future poets shall be sung.

Westward, the course of empire takes its way,  
The four first acts already past;  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day,  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

To this testimony of Berkeley's muse, we shall here add dean Swift's very remarkable letter to lord Carteret, 1724:—

"There is a gentleman of this kingdom gone for England,—it is Dr George Berkeley, dean of Derry; the best preferment among us, being worth £1,100 a-year. He takes the Bath in his way to London, and will, of course, attend your excellency, and be presented, I suppose, by his friend, lord Burlington; and because I believe you will choose out some very idle minutes to read this letter, perhaps you may not be ill entertained with some account of the man, and his errand. He was a fellow of the university here, and, going to England very young, about thirteen years ago, he became the founder of a sect there called the *immaterialists*, by the force of a very curious book upon the subject. Dr Smaleridge, and many other eminent persons, were his proselytes. I sent him secretary and chaplain to Sicily with my lord Peterborough; and, upon his lordship's return, Dr Berkeley spent

above seven years in travelling over most parts of Europe, but chiefly through every corner of Italy, Sicily, and other islands. When he came back to England, he found so many friends that he was effectually recommended to the duke of Grafton, by whom he was lately made dean of Derry. Your excellency will be frightened when I tell you all this is but an introduction, for I am now to mention his errand. He is an absolute philosopher with regard to money, titles, and power; and, for three years past, has been struck with a notion of founding a university at Bermudas, by a charter from the crown. He has seduced several of the hopefulest young clergymen, and others here, many of them well provided for, and all of them in the fairest way of preferment; but, in England, his conquests are greater, and, I doubt, will spread very far this winter. He showed me a little tract which he designs to publish, and there your excellency will see his whole scheme of a life academico-philosophical,—I shall make you remember what you were,—of a college founded for Indian scholars and missionaries, where he most exorbitantly proposes a whole £100 a-year for himself, £40 for a fellow, and £10 for a student. His heart will break if his deanery be not taken from him, and left to your excellency's disposal. I discouraged him by the coldness of courts and ministers, who will interpret all this as impossible, and a vision; but nothing will do. And, therefore, I do humbly entreat your excellency either to use such persuasions as will keep one of the first men in this kingdom, for learning and virtue, quiet at home, or assist him by your credit to compass this romantic design; which, however, is very noble and generous, and directly proper for a great person of your excellent education to encourage."

It would not, indeed, in the records of eminent men, be easy to find a parallel instance, in which a genuine and devoted regard to the higher and truer interests of mankind appears unadulterated with any of those baser elements which it is seldom difficult to detect in all human conduct. The love of money, "the root of all evil," did not, even in its least degree, adulterate the fervent charity that offered to relinquish £1,100 a-year for a salary of £100. Ambition seeks to sun itself in the smile of public life, and the sunshine of courts; but these allurements were as remote from the savage nature of the Summer Isles, as from a conventual cell. In adopting such a speculation, Berkeley resigned the pomps and vanities of earth, and elected a noble course of self-devotion to the good of mankind and the service of God, at the moment that fame, wealth, and preferment, were unfolding the most splendid prospects. The dean of Derry, with the universal favour and growing reputation of Berkeley, might well expect the utmost elevation of which his calling admitted. Nor to those who have rightly estimated the intellectual aspirations of a mind so speculative, will it be much to affirm, that the exchange of philosophical leisure for ardent practical labour in the cause of human welfare, indicates the vigour of the sentiments by which it was dictated. If these considerations be duly entertained, there is a singular interest in the contemplation of the long continued and strenuous exertions which Berkeley made for this strange plan of self-resignation. It is also not without interest to notice the effect of such a character in communi-

cating its warmth—three junior fellows in Trinity college entered with zeal into the scheme, and consented to exchange their hard-won prospects of independence for £40 a-year, and settlements in the Summer Isles.

To raise funds for his project, Berkeley sent a proposal to the king, George I., stating the value of certain lands in the island of St Christopher's, which were then about to be sold by government, and proposed that the proceeds of the sale might be applied to the foundation and building of his college. This was conveyed to the king by the Abbé Gualtiere, an eminent Venetian, with whom Berkeley had formed an intimacy during his travels. The king laid his commands on Walpole to introduce and conduct the proposal through the commons, and granted a charter for its institution, by the name of St Paul's college. The fate of this proceeding may be partly followed out by extracts from those letters in which it was mentioned by Berkeley. The college was to consist of a president and nine fellows, at £100, and £40, per annum, respectively, and to educate the Indians at the rate of £10 per scholar. The first president and fellows were to retain their preferments in England, or Ireland, for a year and a half from the date of their arrival in Bermuda. The matter was accordingly moved in the house of commons; and, on the 11th May, 1726, a vote was carried, "That an humble address be presented to his majesty, that out of the lands in St Christopher's, yielded by France to Great Britain by the treaty of Utrecht, his majesty would be graciously pleased to make such grant for the use of the president and fellows of the college of St Paul's in Bermuda, as his majesty shall think proper." The king answered favourably, and £20,000 were promised by Walpole, in advance, on the security of the expected grant.

While matters were in this state, Berkeley married Miss Anne Forster, eldest daughter to the speaker of the Irish house of commons. This marriage occurred, 1st August, 1728, and, on the following month, he sailed with his wife for Rhode Island. He was also accompanied by a Mr Smilert, an artist; two gentlemen of fortune, Messrs James and Dalton; and a young lady of the name of Hancock. He had also raised a considerable sum of money from means or property of his own, and brought out a considerable library. It was his design to purchase what lands he could, on the nearest part of the continent, for the endowment of the new university; and these were to be paid for from the grant which he was assured should be forthcoming, so soon as the lands were selected, and the agreement completed for them. He took up his residence at Newport in Rhode Island, where he continued two years; during which time he occupied himself in preaching for the clergyman there.

From the correspondence of Berkeley with Prior, it first appears with what cost and exertion the charter had been obtained. By the time it had passed all the offices, it had cost him £130 in fees, "besides expedition-money to men in office." He was, at the same time, encumbered with some obstacles and delays about Miss Vanhomrigh's bequest, which appear to have been managed for him by Prior, and, after urging him to increased exertion, he adds—"I thank God I



find in matters of a more difficult nature, good effects of activity and resolution,—I mean Bermuda, with which my hands are full, and which seems likely to thrive and flourish in spite of all opposition.” On May 12th, 1726, he alludes to the debate in the house of commons, in which none spoke against his motion but two mercantile men; and, among other incidents of the question, he mentions, that the fear entertained by the mercantile interest was, lest America might become independent by the advance of civilization.

We have already noticed the discrepancy which has often been found to exist between the motives of public bodies, and those by which individuals are governed,—a phenomenon of frequent occurrence, which it is not necessary to explain by the assumption of any degree of private corruption or baseness; though such, in numerous cases, will afford the most adequate explanations. But the too prevalent disposition to impute low motives must be, in some measure, checked by a consideration of some prevalence; though by no means so easily comprehended. Prudence, discretion, and the sense of personal responsibility, are the prevalent influences which favour the private counsels of the individuals; while the man, who is but one of the aggregate, and divested of these in proportion to the number with whom the weight of division is to be shared, is more accessible in nearly the same proportion to those more liberal, generous, or disinterested views, which eloquence, or the imposition of circumstances may call forth, and which all are disposed to indulge in at no cost. Hence splendid schemes of good will excite a public enthusiasm sufficient to deceive a single-minded being, who, like Berkeley, is ever ready to see the conduct and professions of mankind through the light of his own spirit. He thought all difficulties over in a single stage of his proceedings, when no person could have said or done otherwise than to approve of a measure, the advantages of which could not be denied, on any public ground, without first advancing reasons which would be both unpopular and untrue. But, on the part of practical politicians, (too generally men of a very inferior range of knowledge and views,) no large or decided plan for the promotion of human welfare, unconnected with some immediate interest, was likely to be sincerely entertained. To men like Walpole the Summer Island scheme was a chimera of speculation, and its author an amiable visionary: £20,000 was a serious outlay on a dream of Utopia; and, to an experienced observer of the world, its frustration might have been predicted. To Berkeley’s simplicity, the address of the house was a decisive incident: the opposition of the council, which was silenced, and apparently set at rest by it, went for nothing. Everything seemed for a while to prosper; meetings and conferences were held to adjust the manner of the grant, and the legal difficulties were easily obviated. It was arranged to settle it by a rent-charge payable on the whole lands, redeemable on the crown paying £20,000 for the use of the president and fellows of the college of St Paul, and their successors. As the time drew nigh, Berkeley expressed great anxiety to pass three months in perfect seclusion, in some lodging near Dublin, and the reasons are not explained; but it may possibly have been to avoid the press and interruptions of society, while he transacted the necessary prelimi-



naries with his associates. His position was at least peculiar enough to make such interruptions peculiarly troublesome and jarring. The death of George I., for a moment, threw a passing cloud over his sanguine impatience,—the broad seal had not been annexed to the grant,—a new warrant had to be made out,—and several tedious delays had to be encountered. These delays were overcome, and, in February, he writes to Prior, “I need not repeat to you what I told you here, of the necessity there is for my raising all the money possible against my voyage, which, God willing, I shall begin in May, whatever you may hear suggested to the contrary.” At last, in September, he writes, “To-morrow, with God’s blessing, I set sail for Rhode Island with my wife and a friend of her’s, my lady Hancock’s daughter, who bears us company. I am married since I saw you to Miss Forster, daughter of the late chief-justice, whose humour and turn of mind pleases me beyond anything I knew in her whole sex.” He then mentions that he shall want £300 before the income of his deanery was to become due. His next communication is a letter from Newport, in Rhode Island, in the April of the year 1729. He, at some length, describes the place, and mentions that the inhabitants consisted of a great variety of sects, each of which allowed the church of England to be the “second best.” He expressed strong anxiety about the punctuality of his remittances, but does not yet appear to entertain any misgivings about the good faith of the government. His friends had gone to live at Boston, while he and his own immediate family, preferring domestic quiet to the bustle and noise of cities, lived on a small estate which he had purchased. “Among my delays and disappointments,” he says, on March, 1730, “I have two domestic comforts that are very agreeable—my wife and son—both which exceed my expectations, and answer all my wishes.” On May 7, 1730, he writes, “I must tell you that I have no intention of continuing in these parts, but to settle the college his majesty hath been pleased to found in Bermuda, and I want only the payment of the king’s grant to transport myself and family thither.” He adds, that his friend Dr Clayton was at the time engaged by his desire to negotiate, and that he had written directions to him to go to the treasury, with the letters patent in his hands, and there make the demand in form.” He goes on, “I have wrote to others to use their interest at court; though, indeed, one would have thought all solicitation at an end, when once I had obtained a grant under his majesty’s hand, and the broad seal of England. As to my going to London, and soliciting in person, I think it reasonable first to see what my friends can do; and the rather because I have small hopes that my solicitations will be regarded more than theirs. Be assured I long to know the upshot of this matter; and that, upon an explicit refusal, I am determined to return home, and that it is not at all in my thoughts to continue abroad and hold my deanery. It is well known to many persons in England that I might have had a dispensation for holding it in long absence during life, and that I was much pressed to it; but I resolutely declined it: and if our college had taken place as soon as I once hoped it would, I should have resigned before this time.” After some further remarks of the same

general purport, he goes on to mention, "I have been at great expense in purchasing land and stock here, which might supply the defects of Bermuda in yielding those provisions to our college, the want of which was made a principal objection against its situation in that island." Among other things, it appears that letters took, in general, at the least, half-a-year, and oftener twice that time, in reaching him from Ireland. Talking of himself and his wife, who had at the time sustained a miscarriage, he says, "Our little son is great joy to us: we are such fools as to think him the most perfect thing in its kind that we ever saw."

It is mentioned by Dr Clarke that the settlement of affairs respecting the will of Miss Vanhomrigh with his joint executor, Mr Marshal, and with a Mr Vanhomrigh, involved Berkeley at this time in great trouble. From the extracts which Dr Clarke has given from his letters to Prior on the subject, it appears that, while all sorts of delay were caused by the refractory temper of Mr Vanhomrigh, the whole creditors of the testatrix were importunately pushing their claims. One of these extracts will serve our purpose here. "November 12, 1726.—I have sent to you so often for certain eclairecissements, which are absolutely necessary to settle matters with the creditors, who importune me to death, you have no notion of the misery I have undergone, and do daily undergo on that account. For God's sake, pray disentangle these matters, that I may once be at ease to mind my other affairs of the college, which are enough to employ ten persons." He mentions in the same letter, "I have spent here a matter of £600 more than you know of, for which I have not yet drawn over."

Berkeley, in this interval, had exerted himself with all the vigour of his mind and body to bring the projected plan to a completion. At last all the arrangements were effected, and nothing remained but to give effect to the agreements he had entered into, by the necessary payments. But in this lay an obstacle not to be surmounted by industry, talent, and enthusiasm. Walpole had, from the first, been unfavourably inclined to the project; and it was probably by the exertion of his influence that the money which had been allotted for the grant was turned to some other use. The lands sold in St Christopher's brought £90,000; of this £80,000 went to pay the portion of the princess royal; the rest was obtained by general Oglethorpe for his new colony in America. Bishop Gibson, on Berkeley's part, applied to Sir Robert Walpole, and at last received the following answer:—"If you put this question to me as a minister, I trust, and can assure you, that the money shall most undoubtedly be paid as soon as suits with public convenience; but if you ask me as a friend whether dean Berkeley should continue in America, expecting the payment of £20,000, I advise him, by all means, to return home to Europe, and to give up his present expectations." This plain speaking had the effect of exposing to Berkeley the entire futility of the dependence on which he had thrown away so much good money and irretrievable time; and, after seven years of vain labour and expectation, he prepared for his return. He distributed his books among the clergy of Rhode Island, and was soon on his way to London. When he arrived

there, his first act was the repayment of the various subscriptions he had received for the advancement of his plan. It was in the interval immediately succeeding his return that he composed the most useful of his writings—the *Minute Philosopher*; in which he adopted the ancient method of the Socratic and Platonic dialogue, of which he gives the happiest example known in modern literature; and follows all the windings of scepticism through the different fields of fallacy, in which it has taken refuge at different times, according to the state of human opinion and knowledge; or, as Clarke writes, pursuing the “freethinker through the various characters of atheist, libertine, enthusiast, scorner, critic, metaphysician, fatalist, and sceptic; and very happily employs against him several new weapons drawn from the storehouse of his own ingenious system of philosophy.” We cannot, indeed, agree with Dr Clarke in attaching any value to arguments drawn from a system of philosophy so baseless as that of Berkeley; but on this we must reserve our comment.

We have already had occasion to give some account of the court of the princess of Wales, and of her love for the society of the learned. Berkeley had the good fortune to hold a place in her esteem; and it is mentioned that Clarke and he were the principal persons in the discussions which frequently arose on those days which were devoted by her highness to these learned colloquies. Berkeley had indeed good need for all his ability to support his character for discretion and common sense, against some unfavourable impressions occasioned by his Bermuda scheme. The world is so deeply in earnest about its own peculiar pursuits, and so careless about those beyond them, that, while it theoretically assents to the importance of the latter, it yet commits the singular fallacy of treating them as fiction; and, so far is this practical inconsistency carried, that the few who are in full earnest in spiritual concerns, and who act on the principle of their reality, will, to some extent, be looked on as visionary, by the dull-headed and carnal-hearted crowd that verbally and formally admits what it practically rejects. Berkeley, whose simplicity and singleness of mind only followed out the principles of a christian divine, in a plan for the good of mankind, obtained the character of a visionary among the formal, sensual, and worldly-minded. And it is curious to observe that his really visionary speculations had no share in this; for the true province of human reason was yet too little understood. Such contemporaries as Clarke, and such successors as David Hume, amply indicate the error of the age, and show that philosophy was yet in its cradle. Though he was singularly disposed by nature for visionary speculation, Berkeley, in this respect, only took the bent of the time; his admirable ingenuity was the gift of nature, and his own. In the discussions to which we have adverted, it is mentioned that bishop Hoadly mostly took part with Clarke, while Sherlocke took Berkeley's side: when the “*Minute Philosopher*” was printed, he took it to the queen, and suggested that such a work could not be the production of one who possessed an unsound mind.

With the queen he soon became a favourite, and his preferment was a determined point. Neither was he long kept in suspense; though



a disappointment was the first result, it was only the means of securing his further elevation. The deanery of Down fell vacant, and he was named to succeed to it; but the duke of Dorset is said to have taken offence at such a step having been taken without his concurrence, and it was thought proper not to press the nomination. The queen, however, at once declared that if they would not suffer Dr Berkeley to be dean (this, however, he already was) in Ireland, he should be a bishop. She kept her promise. In 1736 Cloyne fell vacant, and he was, by letters patent, dated March 17th, in that year, preferred to that see; and in the May following he was consecrated in Dublin, at St Paul's church, by the archbishop of Cashell, with the bishops of Raphoe and Killaloe.

This account, which is that of the biographer from whom our main materials are drawn, is yet, in some slight particulars at variance with the account contained in the bishop's letters written upon the same occasion, though it is to be admitted that the difference may be but apparent, and consequent upon the different aspect in which the facts appeared at different times. By the bishop's account the recommendation came from the duke of Dorset, who was probably, nevertheless, but a consenting party to the wishes of the queen. The following is an extract from the letter written by Berkeley upon the occasion:—"January 22, 1734.—On the 5th instant the duke sent over his plan, wherein I was recommended to the bishoprick of Cloyne: on the 14th I received a letter from the secretary's office, signifying his majesty having immediately complied therewith, and containing the duke of Newcastle's very obliging compliment thereupon. In all this I was nothing surprised, his grace the lieutenant having declared, on this side the water, that he intended to serve me the first opportunity; though, at the same time, he desired me to say nothing of it. As to the A. B. D., (archbishop of Dublin, Dr Hoadly,) I readily believe he gave no opposition. He knew it would be to no purpose, and the queen herself had expressly enjoined him not to oppose me," &c. After which, he says, "Notwithstanding all of which I had a strong penchant to be dean of Dromore, and not to take the charge of a bishoprick upon me. Those who formerly opposed my being dean of Down have thereby made me a bishop; which rank, however desirable it may seem, I had before absolutely determined to keep out of."

Cloyne was let for £1,200 per annum at the time, and had a demesne of 800 acres to the see house. With this accession of wealth and dignity came, as if by virtue of a title, the gout, which paid its first visit in the beginning of February, about ten days after his appointment, and the bishop received the ordinary congratulations on both incidents together. "With my feet lapped up in flannels, and raised on a cushion, I received the visits of my friends, who congratulated me on this occasion as much as on my preferment."

The charges of his see were so considerable as much to diminish the immediate benefit of his promotion; and, upon the whole, he calculated that, after satisfying demands of every kind, his income would be less than £1,000 per annum.



We may pass the slight circumstances attendant on his removal to Cloyne. He received many recommendations from friends or persons in power, of those upon whom they wished that his patronage should be bestowed. To these he resolved to pay no attention, but to confine his services of that description to "ingenuity, learning, and good qualities."

His time, and that of his household, appears to have been divided and disposed to produce the greatest amount both of profit and pleasant recreation. He rose at a very early hour, and summoned his family to a lesson on the bass viol, from an Italian, whom he retained for the purpose. The still more suitable devotion of the morning, in the house of a christian prelate, cannot have been neglected, though not considered unusual enough to be recorded by his biographer. From that his day was spent in study. Of his ordinary avocations at Cloyne, a few incidental notices occur, from time to time, in his correspondence, which is, however, mostly engrossed by matters which were then of more importance, though now of far less. We easily ascertain that he gave time, thought, and money, for the health and comfort of the poor in his diocese, and took a leading part in every plan of utility. There were vast numbers of the peasantry carried off by a fatal epidemic, in 1741, and the bishop was active in his endeavours to mitigate the evil. He was no less attentive to the public interests in every question which attracted attention by its weight; and the fruits are yet to be found in several compositions to be found among his works.

He had no desire to advance his circumstances by change. In 1747, when the primacy became vacant, and several of the bishops were earnestly advancing their claims, he was strongly urged to make application for himself; but this he resolutely refused. We extract a few lines from one of his letters:—"I am no man's rival or competitor in this matter. I am not in love with feasts, and crowds, and visits, and late hours, and strange faces, and a hurry of affairs often insignificant. For my own private satisfaction, I had rather be master of my time than wear a diadem." Another letter to the same correspondent, says, "As to what you say, that the primacy would have been a glorious thing—for my part, I do not see, all things considered, the glory of wearing the name of a primate in these days, or of getting so much money—a thing every tradesman in London may get, if he pleases—I should not choose to be primate, in pity to my children." About the same time an article was inserted in the public papers, which, being also found among the bishop's papers, and seeming to relate incidents of his history, has been attributed to him. It was written upon the recent shocks of an earthquake, felt in London, and is remarkable for the narration of several curious particulars, communicated to the writer in Catania, by count Fezzani, who was witness, and a sufferer in the frightful earthquake which destroyed that place, and more than three-fourths of its population, in 1692. Of these one may be here mentioned. "The count was dug out of the ruins of his own house, which had overwhelmed about twenty persons,—only seven whereof got out

alive. Though he rebuilt his house with all its former accommodations, yet he ever after lay in a small adjoining apartment, made of reeds plastered over. Catania was rebuilt more regular and beautiful than ever: the houses, indeed, are lower, and the streets broader than before, for security against future shocks. By their account, the first shock seldom or never doth the mischief; but the *repliche*, as they term them, are to be dreaded."

In July, 1746, we ascertain that Berkeley's picture was painted by his wife, and sent as a present to Prior. The bishop thus mentions it: "It is an offering of the first-fruits of her painting. She began to draw in last November, and did not stick to it closely, but by way of amusement, only at leisure hours. For my part, I think she shows a most uncommon genius; but others may be supposed to judge more impartially than I. My two younger children are beginning to employ themselves in the same way. In short, here are two or three families in Imokilly bent on painting; and I wish it was more general among the ladies and idle people, as a thing that may divert the spleen, improve the manufactures, and increase the wealth of the nation. We will endeavour to profit by our lord-lieutenant's advice, and kindle up new arts with a spark of his public spirit." The picture here mentioned, after Mr Prior's death, in 1751, went into the possession of the Rev. Mr Archdal, of Dublin, and is now, we believe, the same which hangs in the hall of the university of Dublin. From these, and some further notices among these letters, it is evident that, in addition to what active and useful benevolence maintained in the external economy and occupations of the bishop and his household, their hours of domestic leisure were filled by pursuits of improvement, and ruled by cultivated taste. We also trace in such notices the first impulses of the school of British art, at the same time, or soon after, beginning to arise, when, in the following reign, our countryman Barry, with West and Reynolds, Wilson and Gainsborough, led the van, and dispelled the reproach of English genius. Similar interest appears also to have been taken in the cultivation of music. Considerable efforts were made to procure the best instruments, among which the bass viol seems to have occupied a principal share of the bishop's care. A musical teacher was taken into the family, to instruct all the children; so that, as the bishop wrote, they were "preparing to fill my house with harmony at all events,"—Mrs Berkeley adding to her other accomplishments that of song, and, in her husband's opinion, "inferior to no singer in the kingdom." In a letter of invitation to Mr Gervais, he says, "Courtiers you will here find none, and but such virtuosi as the country affords—I mean in the way of music, for that is at present the reigning passion at Cloyne. To be plain, we are musically mad."

In those portions of the bishop's correspondence which we have seen, there is transfused the happiest vein of all the best affections of human nature, combined with an easy and graceful wit, and a polished refinement of thought and style, hardly to be found united in the same degree, in any other letters we can recollect. Altogether, they help us to conceive the quiet flow of a well-employed, peaceful, and refined

state of life; and the charm of the serene vale of Cloyne, with which the philosophic bishop was so enamoured, that, in 1745, he refused the offer from lord Chesterfield, of an exchange for Clogher, which would have doubled his income.

From time to time he continued to write and publish pamphlets on various topics of public concern, which had very considerable effect. His *Queries* were printed in 1735; a *Discourse* addressed to Magistrates, in 1736; *Maxims* concerning Patriotism, in 1750; all, now collected in his works, remain memorials of his wisdom and zeal for the public good.

In 1744, was published his celebrated treatise on the *Virtues of Tar-water*, under the title of *Siris*. It is remarkable for the proof it contains of vast and various knowledge, and of a curious and imaginative intellect. Commencing with tar-water, he ascends, by a connected series of reflections, to the utmost reach of thought.

In 1752, he put into execution a design which had for many years occupied his mind. As his health began to give way to a sedentary habit, unsuited to his robust frame of body, and his enjoyments began more to depend on the communion of learned society; and when, perhaps, he began to feel a sense of diminished capability for the important duties of his station, a wish began to grow for the retirement of a university. To such a mode of existence he always had a strong inclination. The entry of his son in Oxford university, seems to have given the determining impulse to his resolution. He had, indeed, fallen into a very distressing state of health; a colic which "rendered life a burthen to him" for a time, had given way to sciatica; and when he landed in England he was compelled to travel in a horse-litter to Oxford.

As he was deeply sensible of the obligations of a bishop to his diocese, he endeavoured to obtain an exchange for some canonry at Oxford. When that failed, he wrote to the secretary of state for leave to resign his bishopric. The king was astonished at so unusual a petition; he declared that Berkeley should die a bishop in spite of himself, but gave permission that he might reside wherever he pleased.

The last act of Berkeley on leaving Cloyne was, to sign a lease of the demesne lands of the see, in the neighbourhood of his dwelling, for £200 per annum, of which he directed the distribution among the poor housekeepers of Cloyne, Youghal, and Aghadoe, till his return.

His residence in Oxford was not long. On Sunday evening, Jan. 14, 1753, as he was sitting among his family, and engaged in listening to a sermon of Sherlock's, which Mrs Berkeley was reading to him, he expired so quietly that the fact was not perceived till some time after, when his daughter approached to hand him a cup of tea, and perceived that he was insensible. On further examination, he was found to be cold and stiff. The disease is stated by his biographer to have been a palsy of the heart.

He was interred in Christ Church, Oxford, and a marble monument erected by Mrs Berkeley, for which an inscription was written by Dr



Markham, the head master of Winchester, and afterwards archbishop of York. It is as follows:—

Gravissimo præsul  
 Georgio, Episcopo Clonensi:  
 Viro,  
 Seu ingenii et eruditionis laudem,  
 Seu probitatis & beneficentiæ spectemus  
 In primos omnium ætatum numerando.  
 Si Christianus fueris,  
 Si amans patriæ,  
 Utroque nomine gloriari potes  
 Berkleium vixisse.  
 Obiit annum agens Septuagesimum tertium:  
 Natus anno Ghristi M.DC.LXXIX.  
 Anna Conjux  
 L. H. P.

There is, it is observable, an error of ten years in the statement of his age. Having been born in March, 1684, he died in January, 1753, which gives nearly 69 years of age at his death.

The moral character of Berkeley, if not sufficiently indicated in the foregoing memoir, is universally known to all who take any interest in literary history.

He is described as “a handsome man, with a countenance full of meaning and benignity; remarkable for great strength of limbs; and, till his sedentary life impaired it, of a very robust constitution.”

It remains to offer some account of his principal writings, which must always fix his place high among that class who have taken to themselves the title of philosophers.

The estimate of Berkeley, as a metaphysical writer, is attended with those difficulties which must needs belong to questions which have no real data, and on which human opinion and subtlety can be exercised without limit. To see his intellectual character rightly, and to form some estimate of the tendencies so strongly and curiously displayed in his most eminent compositions, it may be useful to keep in view the peculiarities already pointed out in this memoir; his disposition to reject the conventions and received notions of society, and to turn, with fearless, but not always prudent or fortunate independence, to seek new methods and inferences for himself. This tendency, common, we are inclined to suspect, to a large class of reasoners, is pre-eminently characteristic of Berkeley. With the keenest perception of logical fallacy, he was, in some measure, the slave, rather than the master, of a boundless ingenuity in the invention of reasons: all that could be said for or against any opinion which it was his will, or which he considered it fit and right to maintain, and contest, seems to have been before him. But, far less sagacious in selecting than in maintaining, it depended on the previous truth or fallacy of his proposition whether his reasoning was to be just or the contrary. To the result, his understanding appears comparatively indifferent; in the selection of data, not scrupulous; but, in the chain of intermediate reasoning, he is perhaps unmatched. The subtlety, the invention, and



intellectual daring, which rendered him a formidable opponent to all other sophists, were always ready to betray himself into error. Upon the whole, he affords a remarkable instance of the danger of maintaining truth by those weapons which have usually been employed in the propagation of error—a range of subtlety and specious invention which are not fit to be employed upon realities that, so far as human apprehension can go, are too gross and palpable for such nice and insubstantial instruments.

Of these remarks, Berkeley's philosophical writings offer the very aptest examples. We shall begin with some notice of his celebrated immaterial theory; but for this, (according to our view of the question,) a brief digression is required.

The origin of the entire class of reasoners among which Berkeley is to be numbered, may, perhaps, be referred to the conception of a pure intellectual science, by which mind and its laws might be reduced to a system reasoned out from assumed definitions, as in geometry. This at least will, for the present, serve our purpose, as it is involved, as a primary assumption, in the whole theories of Berkeley, Hume, &c.; and is a very main consideration often essential to the tracing of their errors and fallacies.

Mr Locke, who, in point of fact, is the great antagonist of all metaphysical assumptions, and who, in his attempts to reason from observation alone, fell into some errors of method, which were in a measure incidental to such a (then) daring innovation; justly estimating the importance of unambiguous language as an instrument of communication, failed to notice and guard against the error which was then, and is still, liable to result from the use of definitions, in an inquiry upon a subject so little known as that upon which he was engaged. To define the fundamental assumption on which a theory is to be constructed, as in pure geometry, is an essential law of right reason; but in the *a posteriori* road to the analysis of existing facts, it is a most preposterous inversion of the only available process: this must begin by the observation of actual phenomena, which are the only admissible principles. In metaphysical science, the definition must be the end not the beginning; and it is to be observed, by the way, that all the vague and inconclusive writing of this entire class of writers since Locke, has arisen from their anxiety upon the subject of a precise nomenclature. To the distinct notice of such an error, there was in fact nothing to lead Mr Locke—he did not himself fall into it, but he did not guard against it, and his followers were misled by an imagined precedent. It had, till his time, been the universal custom to define for the purpose of theory—he defined, but it was only for clearness; and the consequence has unhappily been confusion. But, in Mr Locke's reasonings no error was thus incurred; because, in fact, he did not make any use of the definition thus laid down, but proceeded to exercise his sagacity upon phenomena alone.

He was soon followed by a succession of genuine metaphysicians, who, for the most part, misunderstood his language so far as it had direct meaning, and adopted his error as a foundation for their researches. His definition of a simple idea, false *in terms*, was not so in the intent of Mr Locke. While he availed himself of it no further than

it was true, they seized upon it in its *verbal* sense, in which it was a most extravagant assumption, and followed it out with a fidelity irrespective of facts, which, as it were, stared them in the face.

Mr Locke has, we should observe, been subsequently mistaken by both critics and students, who were far from falling into the errors of Berkeley and Hume. Of these all have agreed that his definition is erroneous; but many have committed the oversight of insisting that he meant the error it contains, because the same error frequently appears involved in his language; while some, very justly, if they went but a little further—have observed that this language is frequently inconsistent.

But such was the result of having an unguarded definition, and a loose language, while not a single stage of his reasoning ever depended on either, but upon a very close observation of the intellectual phenomena. It was only that he might be understood that he defined; but, not designing any system constructed out of his use of words, he neglected to perceive to what consequences his definitions exposed him. And to those who are under the impression that he meant more than is here assigned, we must suggest that, although he obviously endeavours to use the same words in the same sense, yet he never, in any one instance, attempts to theorize upon this definition. From this definition, indeed, the consequences are so plain, that it must have led him very much into Berkeley's view. How then is it—it may be asked—that Locke has fallen into an error seemingly so gross? We think it obviously thus: the elementary phenomena of the mind are, so far as we know them, more simple than any thing or fact by which they can be explained—they can be referred to no genus, and *cannot be defined*. The attempt involves some assumption for which there can be no warrant, and therefore involves some theory which is unlikely to be true, and impossible to prove.

But Locke actually did not intend a logical definition—he fell into such, inadvertently, in the attempt to give a *meaning*. This was the process of his mind. As this book is to be about *ideas*, I must begin by telling what I mean by an idea; for, though it is a word which every person of common sense understands very well, yet the philosophers, whose extreme penetration is too great to understand anything, may, as they have done, object or assign some scholastic sense, conformable with old theories. By an idea, I mean no more than the thought which passes through the mind when thinking, whatever it may be; that is to say, the object of the mind in thinking. This unhappy periphrasis for the word *thought* was liable to an obvious construction, by simply turning an idiom of speech into scientific precision. Had Locke said, “the act of the mind when thinking, or the state, or process,” this error would have been escaped, though other fallacies might have been devised by human ingenuity. But it was easy to see that this *object* of the mind must be something distinct from the mind itself, and it was easy to prove it to be distinct from any external thing.

But let us now turn to the consequences deduced by Berkeley from this fruitful error.

If a *simple idea* is the object perceived by the mind, and if it can

be shown that it has no ascertainable relation to the external thing of which it is the supposed representative, it becomes plain that there is no certain evidence of the real existence of the thing of which such uncertain representations are thus presented to the mind. In this point the entire of Berkeley's argument will be found. Among the various fallacies which are comprised in it, besides that which we have noticed at length, there are others also worth observation. Were we to grant the unwarrantable definition, the argument, at most, but goes to prove what should in common sense have been seen at the outset, that the actual existence of external things cannot be demonstrated from the *mere* fact of our perceptions. Of this Berkeley had a full sense; and, consequently, his conclusion is afterwards stated by himself to be, not that the external world does not exist, but that we have no direct perception of its existence, and that this existence is in the mind of God, in which we perceive it,—that is to say, that those ideas which are the actual objects of the mind in thinking, are ideas in the mind of God.

Now, it is curious with what narrow precision Berkeley has, in the course of this argument, excluded on every side every portion of fact which did not suit his reasoning. For, granting the idea to be a distinct object, still, those very variations of appearance, and that want of unchanging coincidence between the idea and the thing, from which he disproves the evidence which the senses are supposed to give of such things, are so far from correctly leading to such a conclusion, that they are absolutely the very best proof that can be found of the reality of external phenomena. They are the *demonstrable* and calculable results of the properties of external phenomena—distance, motion, magnitude, &c.; insomuch, that a much better argument can be constructed from the same considerations *for*, than *against*, the direct evidence of our perceptions. We do not mean to affirm that this would amount to a demonstration; but it would certainly destroy the force of any opposite inference from the same premises. And, what is equally curious, were those variations and differences wanting, the fact would lead with far more conclusiveness to Berkeley's theory. Could we perceive no differences of degree in operations and processes, it is evident that we could not perceive them at all: it would imply a contradiction in terms. If we could see a house at the distance of a mile, and at twenty yards, so as to give precisely the same image, we should have demonstration against the evidence of sight.

As for our perception of ideas in the mind of the Supreme Being, it seems to contain a strange oversight. It is indeed evident to what an extent Berkeley, and all the reasoners of his class, have reasoned exclusively on certain words and definitions, so as entirely to shut out all the ordinary conditions inseparably connected with all knowledge. If this proposition were simply to be confined to a certain limited class of ideas, which are those evidently contemplated by Berkeley, it would be difficult to deal with his assertion. But what is true of a simple idea, is universally true of every idea on the very same ground; and, consequently, the whole farrago of human folly, sin, error, and contradiction, must be the substance of the divine thoughts—even the doubts of his existence must be among the heterogeneous mass.



When he affirms or attempts to prove that things can have no real existence distinct from their being perceived, it is quite plain that his asserting that he does not deny their real existence, amounts to nothing; for such is not the meaning of real existence. The arguments by which he reduces things to ideas absolutely destroy their *real* existence, in any sense but that of a fleeting succession of contradictory thoughts.

To pursue this question farther is beyond our limits, and the design of this work. Berkeley was accused of overlooking the statements of the Scripture with respect to the creation—the consideration which stopped Malebranche. But, indeed, it is easy to see how Berkeley could dispose of such an objection. It would be no long step to transfer Scripture to the mind from which it came; yet the answer, too, is ready—Scripture is not merely a train of ideas, but of affirmations and negations about an external state of things, and these must be true or false.

We must now pass to another Essay of less importance, did it not curiously illustrate all the same dispositions of the mind,—the zeal that would maintain truth by any power of sophistry, or even at the sacrifice of reason itself. As arguments drawn from the properties of matter had been used in support of atheism, he thought it a sufficient reason for the denial of the existence of matter; so, as an eminent mathematician had thought it reasonable to assail Christianity on the ground of its mysteries, Berkeley made an attack on an important branch of mathematics on the same ground.

There is, indeed, in the very conception, a singular oversight in Berkeley's Analyst. To answer the alleged intention of his argument, it should run thus,—You affirm that Christianity is untrue, because it consists of certain mysteries; I will show you that there are similar mysteries in mathematics, *which is true nevertheless*. Now, if this argument should be conducted *by showing the fallacy* of these mathematical mysteries, it simply rejects them as false mathematics, or, at best, leaves the objection of the deist untouched; for, to complete the analogy in which the answer consists, the mysteries of Christianity should also be given up. If, however, Berkeley had shown that such contradictions, or such inconclusive reasonings as he points out in the fluxionary calculus are such but apparently, and by reason of the fact that the secret of the intellectual process had not been found out, he would then have precisely done what he proposed; for, the mysteries of divine truth are nothing more in this respect than facts, of which but part is known, and which are not within the limits of human knowledge.

When we first chanced to look at the Analyst, we were under the impression that such was actually the design of Berkeley, and that his controversial tone and allegations of sophistry were but the trick of reasoning to set the point in its broadest light. But, in fact, he is bitterly and angrily sincere, and seems altogether to lose sight of his purpose in the heat of controversy. The argument, however, exhibits both the acuteness of his reason, and—may we venture to say it?—the unsoundness of his judgment. To grant his conclusion and take the question in its most difficult aspect; a certain process, one of the steps of which is a false assumption, leads, by some process not

intelligible, to a result *uniformly* correct. Now, what is the objection?—briefly and substantially it is this,—the conclusion is not attained by any known process of logic. This would be fair enough if any known process of logic could, from the same conditions fairly used, prove the possible fallacy of the conclusion: to do this, however, we have to observe, not only the ascertained process must be tried by this test, but the *secret* condition must be included. This is, by the hypothesis, impossible. Next, it is to be considered that if Berkeley's view be correct, the true result is obtained by a compensation of errors. It is evident that there can be no fallacy in the reasoning of the process, unless this compensation can be shown also to be *accidental*—this is not alleged, and the argument correctly stated on his view would be this,—there is a certain method of reasoning which discovers truth by the compensation of opposite errors. The fact is this,—the initial statement makes an omission, which the conclusion rectifies by a necessity arising from the hypothesis itself. But if the compensation is just, and the uniform result of a process, there is no fallacy; it is simply one of the processes of reason in the discovery of truth. It is either a new law, or reducible to an old law of logic; but the argument, which when correctly used leads to a true conclusion, is not a sophism. It is curious enough that Berkeley's objection to the calculus is, in fact, the principle into which Carnot resolves it.

But indeed it is not difficult to perceive that the errors supposed are merely resources of calculation—the actual logic contains no contradiction, which is really to be found in Berkeley's mistake as to the intent and real process of the argument. Berkeley's main objection, may, for clearness, be resolved into two. That the reader, who is not conversant with such questions, may understand these, a simple statement of the nature of the reasoning to which he objects will be necessary. If certain variable quantities are so related to each other, that as one of them is taken greater or less, the other will also increase or diminish according to some ascertained law, and that it is desired to ascertain the state which is the limit of those changes. A statement of the known conditions is made in a form called an equation, which is supposed to represent the variable quantities, together with their supposed increments and decrements. This equation is not, as in common algebra, a statement in which all the values are supposed *fixed*, and serving to ascertain the *precise value* of the unknown from the given quantities. It is, in fact, the statement of a hypothesis *essentially implying the contrary*, and made for the purpose of reasoning on a state of *continued* change; consequently, it represents an *initial state*, from which a final state is to be deduced: therefore, it is evident that the very law of reason to which Berkeley objects, is *the accurate logic of the question*; for, a hypothesis must be made in the first equation, which must disappear in the last. The *question* is,—if such increments go on continually lessening, and may be assumed therefore indefinitely small or nothing, what will be the consequence? But there is in the objection, to which this is the answer, another sophism: Berkeley attempts to show that the equation is false, and, strictly speaking, it is so, according to the laws of common algebra;

tried by the assumed test it would be found to want certain quantities. But these are the very quantities which must necessarily go out by the very principle above stated—terms which would add much complication in the reasoning, and have no effect in the conclusion, and have, therefore, by a universal rule of reason, been omitted in a compendious process, which does better without them. Now, one of Berkeley's arguments consists in a calculation by which he makes these quantities appear,—which the ordinary method of fluxions does not exhibit. He thus appears to falsify the ordinary process. But the reply to this objection is, that the omission of certain considerations, for the convenience of an argument, in which it is essentially implied that they are unimportant, is not a fallacy. The equation, in its first form, is a statement of the *effective conditions* of a question; and all Berkeley's objections could be met by simply adding *et cetera*. So far relates to the algebraic method: the answer is, however, completed by a consideration which will lead to the other point. The reason why the omission is of no importance is this: that the variables being supposed to pass through all the successive states of magnitude, while the increments, or decrements, diminish to a certain state, in which they cease to exist—the question is, to determine or prove this state. And this is determined by assuming the symbol expressing the increment to be  $= 0$ , the equation must then be such as to indicate the sought *limit*; and the quantities which were involved in the omitted part of the difference, must have ceased to exist. If the question were, what would be the result, supposing the variables to *stop half way*—all Berkeley's reasoning would be conclusive, so far as it applies. Against the conclusion itself, he offers another curious cavil. But the mathematical reader does not require this exposition; and for the reader unversed in such considerations, we have perhaps gone to the utmost limit of clearness. Berkeley's objection to any conclusion being founded on a ratio, of which the quantities are evanescent, has been anticipated by Newton, in a scholium, contained in the first section of the first book of his *Principia*. We shall, therefore, here conclude with the observation, that Newton's own statement of the intent of his method should have set Berkeley on a juster course of reasoning. “But because the hypothesis of indivisibles appears more hard, and, therefore, that method has been considered less geometrical, I have thought fit rather to found the demonstrations of the following propositions upon the *first* and *last* sums and ratios of nascent and evanescent quantities; that is, to the *limits* of those sums and ratios.”\* It is, if just, curious enough, that Berkeley's objection, to what he calls an erroneous equation, might be obviated by the addition of an “&c.”

If the reader should desire to see Berkeley's powers to advantage, he must look for them in his attacks upon the sophistry of others,—in the *Minute Philosopher*, and in portions of his *Theory of Vision*.

We have, in this memoir, sufficiently noticed the first of these excellent compositions.

\* “Sed quoniam durior est indivisibilium hypothesis, et propterea minus geometricæ censetur; malui demonstrationes rerum sequentium ad ultimas quantitatum evanescentium summas et rationes, primasque nascentium, id est, ad limites summarum et rationum deducere.”



His new theory of vision is curious for the mixed evidence it gives of the disposition of his understanding to the illusions of his own subtlety, and the clearness of his apprehension when judging of the fallacies of others. It indeed seems not a little curious how much of the sounder portion of his conclusions appears to be the result of his more unsound reasonings. In his disproof of the external world, he dissipates the erroneous doctrines of abstract ideas. His Theory of Vision, evidently composed for the same purpose, in the same manner draws from him the most admirable details, and the rectification of old fallacies. But the subject occupies much of the attention of the present time, and would lead us too far for any purpose connected with these memoirs.

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### III. LITERARY SERIES.

#### *Michael Cleary.*

BORN A.D. ———.—DIED A.D. 1643.

OF MICHAEL CLEARY very little is satisfactorily known, and we should, for this reason, consider ourselves absolved from any notice of him, but for the place which he occupies in the history of our Irish literature. This topic, so far as relates to the commencement of the present division of these memoirs, must be regarded as rather belonging to the antiquarian than to the historical biographer. But it is necessary, as briefly as we may, to account for our neglect of the very numerous poets who lived in the earlier half of the 17th century, and whose writings are yet extant. For this there are sufficient reasons: there are no materials for their personal histories, and their writings are not extant in any published form. The great celebrity of a renowned author of unpublished poetry might impose it upon us to give some account of his works; but great indeed must be the importance of the writings to which such a tribute would be excusable here, and whatever may be the collective worth of the bards and historians of the period included in these remarks, there are, individually, few instances which demand the distinction of a memoir. We might, by the help of some very accessible authorities, easily continue in this period the barren list of unknown poets, which helped to fill the vacuity of our previous period; but, on looking very carefully over those materials, we are unable to perceive what purpose would be served by such a waste of our space, already contracting too fast for the important matter yet before us.\*

In that portion of the introductory observations allotted to the gene-

\* We should here apprise the reader that the seeming disproportion, between the space which we have given to the ecclesiastics and the literary persons belonging to this period, is to be explained by the fact, that the most respectable of our writers hold also a prominent rank among our ecclesiastical dignitaries of the same period.

ral consideration of Irish literature, we have endeavoured to give some general notices of the character and importance of this unknown but numerous class of writings, which lie concealed, though not inaccessible, in the archives of colleges, and in public and private libraries. The individual whose name affords us occasion for these remarks, was a native of Ulster, and a Franciscan friar. He was early in life known as learned in the antiquities of his country, and as having a critical acquaintance with the Irish tongue. These qualifications recommended him to Mr Hugh Ward as a fit person to collect information for his projected history of the Irish saints, for which purpose he was sent to the Irish college in Louvain. The materials which he collected in the course of fifteen years passed into the hands of Colgan, by the death of Ward.

Cleary at the same time collected materials, which he reduced into three volumes of Irish history, of which the letters are mentioned by Ware.

He was one of the compilers of the "Annals of Donegal"—a MS. of the greatest authority in the antiquities of Ireland. His last work was a Dictionary of the obsolete words in the Irish Language, published in 1643, the year of his death.

### John Colgan.

BORN A.D. —.—DIED A.D. 1658.

COLGAN was a Franciscan in the Irish convent of St Anthony of Padua, in Louvain, where he was professor of divinity. He collected and compiled a well-known work of great authority among antiquarians, and of considerable use in some of the earlier memoirs of this work.

His writings were numerous; and all, we believe, on the ecclesiastical antiquities of Ireland. His death, in 1658, prevented the publication of many of them.

### Goffrey Keating.

BORN A.D. —.—DIED A.D. 1650.

KEATING, well known as the writer of an antiquarian history of Ireland—of great authority for the general fulness with which it preserves the traditionary accounts of the earliest times, though liable to some rather hasty censures for the indiscriminate combination of the probable and improbable into one digested narrative, and in the language of implicit belief. Such a work is, nevertheless, the most certain and authentic record of the ancient belief of the learned and unlearned of the land; and if the facts be not true in themselves, they evidently characterize the mind of a period, while, generally speaking, there is every reason to give credit to the more important parts of the narrative; and, above all, to the genealogical traditions of the ancient families of chiefs and kings. It is by no means a just inference that

they who entertain superstitious notions, and believe the absurdest mythological fables and traditions, are, therefore, to be discredited in their statements of the ordinary facts of history; in the former, both the senses which observe, and the faithfulness which records, are wholly uninvolved—the facts belong to a different class of things, and a man may believe a fable, yet speak truth in the concerns of life. When a historian's authority, or the authorities on which he writes, are to be questioned, the question must be,—is the relation honest, and are the facts such as to admit of natural error? Now, in Keating's history, the line of demarcation between truth and error will, in the main, be easily seen. It will be at once observed, that the mere fact of the existence of a large body of ancient literature, with all the extant remains and traditions of Ireland, undeniably prove the existence of some old state of civil order different from anything now existing, and as far removed from the savage state. Such a state of things must needs have left some record stamped with the form, and having at least all the main outlines of the truth; and it may be asked where this record—of which the absence would be more improbable than any part of Irish history—can be found, if not in those very traditions which are the genuine remains of Irish literature, and the authorities of old Keating. The facts are, it is true, often strangely involved with fable; but there is no instance in which the discrimination of an unbiassed intellect cannot at once make the due allowance.

Keating studied for twenty-three years in the college of Salamanca. On his return to Ireland he was appointed to the parish of Tybrid, which he soon resigned. He is said to have been driven into concealment by the hostility of a person whose mistress he excommunicated. This person having threatened to murder him, he took refuge in a wood between the Galty mountains and the town of Tipperary; and in this retirement he wrote his history in the Irish language.

He was buried in the church of Tybrid, founded by himself and his successor, in 1644.

His history was translated into English by a Mr Dermod O'Connor, whose version is considered to have many inaccuracies. Another translation was since commenced by a Mr William Halliday, an Irish scholar of great reputation. His task was cut short by an early death. He had proceeded so far as the Christian era, and published a thin octavo, which has induced much regret among antiquarians that he did not live to complete his undertaking.

Keating's other writings are of slight importance—they are a few poems and professional treatises.

### **The Hon. Robert Boyle.**

BORN A.D. 1626.—DIED A.D. 1691.

THE account of the early infancy of this most illustrious Irishman has been written by himself under the title of *Philalethes*. This period of his life was subject to more casualties and changes than are often known to occur in the maturer age of the generality of men; and this,



indeed, in a manner and to an extent, which the character of our more civilized times can scarcely be conceived to admit of. At the age of three his mother died, and his intellect and moral temper were, at that early age, sufficiently mature to comprehend and feel this irreparable deprivation. The well-known activity of his ambitious father, the first earl of Cork—a man ever on the stretch in the pursuit of fortune and power—left his home often without a master, and his children without a parent. To these sources of casualty may be added the frequent necessity of removal and travelling through a wild and unsettled country, and under the charge of menials. On the road, the robber lurked among the rugged mountain-passes, and in the concealment of the bordering woods; on the British channel the pirate roamed without restraint; and the Turkish galley infested and defied the very coasts, which have now so long been sacred from such insults and dangers.

At three years of age he had a narrow escape from being drowned, by the fall of the horse on which he was carried, in crossing a deep and rapid brook which was swollen by the rains. At seven, he tells us that he had a still more remarkable escape from being crushed to death by the fall of the ceiling of the chamber in which he slept.

At three years of age he was sent to Eton, of which the provost was then Sir Henry Wotton, an intimate friend of his father's. Here he was placed under the immediate tuition of Mr Harrison, who, it is said, had the sagacity to discover the unusual capacity and the singular moral tendencies of his pupil, even at that early age, as well as the skill to adapt his moral and intellectual treatment to so promising a subject. Perceiving the indications of a mind unusually apprehensive and curious, he was careful that these happy inclinations should not want for exercise; and, as he had a willing mind to deal with, he avoided damping, in any degree, the voluntary spirit, by even the semblance of a constraint, which, in common cases, is of such primary necessity. By this method, so applicable in this peculiar instance, the ardour for information, which seems to have been so providentially implanted in the youthful philosopher's mind, became so intensely kindled, that it became necessary to employ some control, for the purpose of forcing him to those intermissions of rest and needful exercise for which boys are commonly so eager. Harrison meanwhile watched over the extraordinary youth with a zealous, intelligent, and assiduous care, ever ready to answer his questions, and to communicate knowledge in the form of entertaining discourse.

The main object of his studies at Eton was the acquisition of classical knowledge, and he soon attained a considerable intimacy with the best writers of antiquity. He himself has mentioned, that the accidental perusal of Quintus Curtius had the effect of awakening his imagination, in an extraordinary degree, and thus excited in his mind an increased thirst for historical knowledge.\*

\* It is curious to compare the impressions communicated by the same circumstance to different minds. We extract the following from a well-known periodical:—"The effect which the same romantic historian is said to have produced on Charles XII., is, however, more direct and natural. In reading of the feats of

We must confess to some difficulty in distinctly appreciating such an impulse from such a cause, further than as the transient impression of an hour, which the next would dispel. The excitements of Quintus Curtius are scarcely to be expected in the page of regular history. A more natural impulse is attributed to the accident of his being initiated in the range of romantic fiction, which was, we are bound to say, a most grievous error, which cannot be too strenuously deprecated in these pages, and which we shall therefore pause to discuss more fully. The circumstances are these:—During his stay at Eton he was attacked by a fit of the tertian ague, of such severity and duration, that his constitution, naturally delicate, became very much debilitated, and a long time elapsed before he recovered his strength sufficiently for the purpose of his studies. In this condition it occurred to his tutor—who, after all, was more of the scholar than the philosopher—to indulge his craving and restless mind by the perusal of novels and romances. Some reflections in a contemporary memoir, on the same incident, convey our sentiments with so much truth that we shall here extract them,—“As might be presumed, the effect was to leave on his mind a distaste for less stimulative aliment, and to excite his mind to a state of undue activity. The sense of martial ardour,—the pride and stimulus of military emulation, ambition, and danger,—the physical sympathies of action, with all the vain glories of romance, were acted on and called forth. He became a castle-builder and a dreamer. He makes a remark on this subject, of which we have long since had occasion to learn the value—that it is unfortunate for those who have busy thoughts to be without timely employment for their activity. Such, indeed, is the misfortune which—worse than even the corruptions of passion—has consigned many a high and far-grasping intellect to a life of dreams. Gambling, and debauchery, and the seductions of sense, are not more sure in their fatal effects, so uninterruptible in their course, or so seductive, as this refined and intellectual fascination,—more sure and dangerous, because it operates in loneliness, and finds its good within itself. When the imagination is once fairly seized with this self-seeking desire, even the slightest thing that occurs, or that is seen, read, or heard of, is enough to give it impulse and direction, and the heart acts the hero or voluptuary’s part; the Augustus, or Nero, or Heliogabalus; the Paris, or Achilles; and, in its own secluded recess, rules or disposes of more worlds than Alexander could have conquered. There is an interest in finding our infirmities reflected in a mind like Boyle’s; but it is both instructive and encouraging to learn, by what timely resolution and prudence, in the

Alexander he was affected by a sympathy of a kindred mind, and became a warrior. Quintus Curtius wrote for a corrupt and luxurious age, when the nobles of the latter periods of the Roman empire were excluded from politics and war, and only alive to the stimulants of sense and taste. His invention and eloquence were of a high order, and he wrote for effect—his success was worthy of a better object. His descriptions and pictorial touches,—his dialogues and characteristic sayings and incidents,—and even his description of the private reflections of the persons of the narrative, while they materially diminish his credit as a historian, must still have produced on his ancient readers an effect, not greatly inferior to that produced on the readers of *Ivanhoe*.”—*Dublin University Magazine*, May, 1836.

application of means, he shook off this disease of the spirit. To recover his power of application he had recourse to the study of mathematics, and found in its precise relations and rigid conclusions that interest and necessity of *attention*, which was the remedy his case required."\* There is indeed prevalent, in our own times, an error well worthy of the most serious consideration upon the subject of a very large class of works of fiction—we mean that most pernicious of all literary compositions, of which it is the real aim to tamper with passion and sentiment, and the pretence—no doubt sincere—to inculcate some good lesson in morality and prudence. Such lessons are not only useful, but necessary to young and old; but it is known that their operation is slow, and the result of much and repeated trial and experience: it is also known that the truths of experience are long known to the understanding before they have any very practical influence on the heart; while, on the contrary, passion and sentiment, the main impulses of conduct, operate with a spontaneous force in the fullest maturity of that head wisdom which is expected to constrain them. Reason may be called the helm, and experience the chart of prudence and principle; but passion and sentiment have pretty much the same relation to the tempest, the current, and the shoal, and it seems a curious inconsistency of purpose which would make the latter instrumental to the uses of the former. A lesson, for example, of the delicate embarrassments, cross-purposes, and misunderstandings of the tender passions, may be made the vehicle for noble sentiments and virtuous conduct; but the young and tender bosom which has thus been betrayed into those fearful and seductive sympathies, will be infected by their clinging influence, when the noblest maxims of virtue and its loftiest examples are forgotten. In vain the charms are spread which are to sweeten the lesson of virtue, if they have a far nearer connexion with infirmities, follies, and vices. The Minerva, with the naked bosom, may preach in vain on the charms of abstinence and heroic self-denial; human nature will seize the thoughts, and be attracted by the sense for which its affinity is nearest. Heroism, set off by beauty, and softened by the glow of the passions, will, for a moment, appear doubly heroic; but the enthusiasm of taste will subside, and the pupil or spectator will find some more interesting and congenial way of applying the lesson. As we do not here think it necessary to repeat the commonly urged objection to works of fiction—that they offer false views of society—we will say that it is not, certainly, from any want of concurrence in them; and we may observe, by the way, that it is the high praise of the Waverley novels that they avoid all these objections, neither giving false views, nor deriving interest from deleterious materials.

As to the effect of such influences upon the mind of Boyle, it must have been materially diminished by the great counteraction, if not entire preponderance of dispositions of an opposite tendency, which will show themselves plainly enough as we proceed. Without entering into any refinement upon intellectual powers and tendencies, the character of Robert Boyle was eminently practical, and his temper

\* Dublin University Magazine, May, 1836.



conscientious in an unusual degree. The general tenor of his early life was in itself adapted to favour, and, in some measure, produce these dispositions: the unsettled character of the times in which he lived; the rude emergencies of even a change of place, attendant on such times; and the universal agitation and tempest of the period in which he came to man's estate, were, in no small degree, calculated to turn the attention of thoughtful spirits on the external scene, and to give development to the turn for observation and practical application. It is perhaps not improbable, that such was the general effect of the civil wars of that period upon the times and the public mind,—the fine-spun cobwebs of philosophy, and the gorgeous cloudwork of poetry, are probably deprived of their influence upon the mass of minds when so kept painfully on the stretch by startling realities. But with such considerations we are evidently unconcerned.

After having continued four years at Eton, Boyle was recalled by his father, who had at this time come to live at Stalbridge, in Dorsetshire. He, nevertheless, sedulously applied himself to the acquisition of classical knowledge, and also of ancient history. His father engaged a Mr Marcombes, a foreigner, to assist his studies. This gentleman had been first employed as travelling tutor to his brothers, the lords Broghill and Kinalmeaky.

In 1638, when he had attained his eleventh year, he was sent on his travels, under the charge of the same gentleman. His destination was Geneva, where he was to continue his studies,—a plan most probably originating with Marcombes, who was a native of the town, and, having a family resident in it, was evidently very much convenienceed by the arrangement. They took their route by London, where his brother, who was also to be the companion of his foreign sojourn, was to be married to Mrs Anne Killigrew, a maid of honour to the queen. From London they found their way to Paris, and from thence to Lyons, and on through Savoy to Geneva.

Boyle, in his autobiographical memoir, attributes much of the moral improvement of his mind to the care, and to the influence of some strong points in the character of Mr Marcombes, and we are strongly inclined to join in the opinion. He mentions his tutor as one who was an acute observer of the ways of men, who formed his opinions from life, not from books, and had not merely a contempt, but an aversion for pedantry, which he hated “as much as any of the seven deadly sins.” It is also very evident that Mr Marcombes was by no mean an indulgent observer, but nice, critical, choleric; and to the quickness of his temper Mr Boyle ascribes the fortunate subjugation of his own. If, indeed, Mr Boyle's temper was as irritable as he himself represents it to have been, this is a fact not unimportant to the instructors of youth; for he is one of the most perfect models which biography affords, of patience and mildness. In this, however, other and far superior influences must claim a larger share, as Mr Boyle was pre-eminently a christian. To religion, we are inclined to think, there was in his mind a very peculiar tendency. Such tendencies, we are aware, do not, as a matter of course, lead to the actual adoption of any religion, still less of the christian religion. When the great truths of christianity are not instilled into the heart with

the first rudiments of education, they can only be afterwards received on evidence which claims the assent of the understanding, and this must be sought and studied with much careful attention. In Boyle's time, this evidence was easily overlooked for many reasons; and it is always listened to with strong reluctance,—the severe, simple, and practical requisitions of christian teaching being strongly opposed to the whole bent of human nature, and the entire spirit of social life. Butler, and Paley, and other eminent men, afterwards called up to crush the hydra of infidelity, had not yet placed the question within the easy reach of the public mind. Notwithstanding the able writings of Grotius, and those of the more ancient apologists, unhappily, during the middle ages, christianity had been displaced from its basis of evidence, and placed upon a foundation of quicksand, so as to present neither its genuine form nor its real credentials.

From these considerations, we lean to suspect that religious truths had no very strong hold of Mr Boyle's mind, at the period of which we speak. The incidents which had a decided effect to unsettle his belief, are such as to illustrate some of the foregoing remarks very strongly, while, at the same time, they indicate a very singular impressibility.\* He himself mentions the solemn impression upon his mind of a tremendous thunderstorm in the dead of the night; it led him to reflect earnestly upon his state of mind, and to recollect his great deficiencies according to the standard by which he professed to walk. Some time after this, however, an impression of a very different nature was made upon him, in one of those excursions which he was accustomed to make from Geneva into the mountains that lay around. Visiting the ancient monastery of Chartreuse, in a wild alpine recess near Grenoble, his feelings were so powerfully wrought upon by the savage and gloomy scenery, the curious pictures, and mysterious traditions of the monastery, that his excited imagination called up and lent a momentary reality to the legendary superstition of the place. The powerful impressions thus made upon a mind, characteristically impressible, were such as to obscure and cast a dimness upon his far less vivid impressions of christianity, of which, it must be observed, he knew not any distinct proofs; and his reason, bewildered between the appeals of a strongly impressed and sensibly imbodied superstition, and of a vague and imperfectly conceived belief, became unsettled upon the momentous truths of religion, which, under the same common name, offered such opposite and irreconcilable demands on faith. The traditions of St Bruno, which were thus brought as a sensible reality to the imagination, stood, as it were, nearer to the eye than the remote and dimly apprehended truths of the gospel; and, while the fancy gave power to the one, reason ceased to discriminate with accuracy, and lost its inadequate hold of the other. The process is by no means one confined to a youthful fancy and a visionary turn, but, with some modification, can be distinctly traced to the pseudo-philosophy of the last century. The shallow but eloquent Vol-

\* "Mr Boyle's mind was of that reflective and sensitive cast, on which slight influences had great effects; nor, without the full allowance for this, can the construction of his character be distinctly understood."—*Dublin University Magazine*.

ney has expanded the fallacy into a systematic argument; the imposing sophistry of Gibbon—so far as it can be extracted from the ambiguities of style—indicates a mind labouring under misconceptions of the same order.

With respect to Boyle, his own account of the result substantiates the important fact affirmed in the foregoing remarks. Like Gibbon, Paine, Volney, and other persons, the history of whose scepticism is known, he was ignorant of the actual evidences of the facts and authorities of christianity, and knew it only, as it is most commonly known to the multitude, through its moral and doctrinal rules and principles; and thus, when it became reduced into the mass of clashing creeds and dogmas, its hold upon mere reason was, as a matter of course, obscured. But it is to the praise of Mr Boyle, that with him to doubt was to inquire, and to inquire was to cast away the prepossessions, and resist the prejudices which obscure the shallow depths of human speculation. He was determined to “be seriously inquisitive of the very fundamentals of christianity, and to hear what both Jews and Greeks, and the chief sects of Christians, could allege for their opinions; that so, though he believed more than he could comprehend, he might not believe more than he could prove.” The intellectual soundness thus perceptible in a youth of fourteen is very remarkable; and the more so, because it shows a just discernment of the fallacy upon which so many clever, and sometimes profound reasoners, have been wrecked in all times. Some refuse to assent to that which cannot be explained, while others invent systems for the mere explanation of the same difficulties: both confounding explanation with proof, and overlooking the most elementary conditions of reason and the limits of human knowledge. Boyle proceeded with the characteristic sincerity of his temper to fulfil his wise resolution. A mind, so happily constituted for research, could not fail to receive ready satisfaction as to the evidences which offer the clearest and best examples of every proof within the compass of human knowledge. He is known as an eminent christian; and this part of his history may be said to have its illustrious monument in the foundation of a lecture for the defence of the Christian religion, which has been occupied by some of the most eminent names in christian theology.

In September, 1641, he left Geneva, and visited many of the principal towns in Italy. He made a more prolonged stay at Venice, then in its full splendour, a great centre of trade, and a concourse of nations, tongues, and manners. It was the age when the last and consummate finish of a polite education was sought in foreign travel,—foreign travelling, still an important advantage to the scholar, was then an indispensable requisite to the polite or learned. It supplied the deficiency of books by the actual observation of things—it opened the mind by extending the sphere of its intercourse; and, while it enlarged the conversation, it softened prejudices, and gave ease, affability, and freedom to the manners and address.

In Florence he passed the winter of the same year, and, during his stay, acquired the Italian language. Here also he became acquainted with the “new paradoxes” of Galileo, an acquisition, which, to the genius of Boyle, may well be supposed to have been important.



From Florence he went on to Rome, and was enabled to exercise his observing and inquiring spirit without interruption, by taking upon him the character of a Frenchman. He had, while in Geneva, acquired the most perfect ease and correctness in that language, and, in Rome, the acquisition became important. It was his aim to escape the penetrating espionage of the English jesuits, whose duty it would have been to denounce the prohibited presence of an English protestant. Mr Boyle attributed this prohibition to the reluctance which was felt by the Papal court and the ecclesiastical authorities to allow strangers, and particularly protestant strangers, to perceive the very low state of religion then prevalent, and the little reverence paid to the Pope in his own city. There was, indeed, enough to fix his attention upon the darkness and intellectual prostration of the place and time. He never, he declares, saw so small a respect for the Pope as in Rome, or met with infidelity so open and unshrinking as in Italy.

From Rome he returned to Florence, and from thence to Pisa, Leghorn, and by sea to Genoa. He then returned to France. On his journey he was exposed to no small danger in the streets of a frontier town, for refusing to take off his hat to a crucifix. At Marseilles he met with gloomy tidings, accompanied by a severe and unexpected disappointment. Having expected remittances, he only received letters from his father, giving deplorable accounts of the rebellion, and informing him that he had only had it in his power to raise £250, to bear their expenses home. This remittance miscarried, it is believed from the dishonesty of the banker in Paris to whom it was committed. Under these embarrassing circumstances, Mr Marcombes brought them back to Geneva, where they were compelled to remain for two years, in the vain expectation of supplies, and at last found it necessary to have recourse to an expedient, to enable them to find their way home. Mr Marcombes obtained a sufficient amount of jewellery on his own credit, and this enabled them to travel on to England, where they arrived in 1644.

In the mean time the earl of Cork had died. He left, by will, the manor of Stalbridge, and some other property in Ireland, to Robert Boyle. But though thus well provided for in the way of fortune, the unsettled condition of the country rendered it difficult for him to obtain money, so that he found it expedient to reside for several months with his sister, lady Ranelagh. This arrangement was fortunate, as it was the means of diverting him from a purpose which he had recently formed of entering the army.

As his brother, lord Broghill, had considerable interest, he obtained through his means a protection for his estates in England and Ireland, and was also permitted to return to France for the purpose of settling the debts which he had been forced to contract.

He soon returned and retired to his manor of Stalbridge, where he spent four years in the most intense pursuit of knowledge, occasionally, however, relaxing his mind, or diversifying his studies, by excursions to London and Oxford. During this interval he applied himself for a time to ethical investigations, upon which subject he composed a treatise. His favourite pursuit, however, was natural philosophy, in different departments of which he soon obtained as much knowledge

as the state of science at that period afforded. He mentions of himself, that, at this period of his life, his industry was so unremitting, that he continued to mix study with every pursuit, so as not to lose a moment which could be profitably applied. "If they were walking down a hill, or on a rough road, he would still be studying till supper, and frequently proposed such difficulties as he had met with to his governor."

Among the resources of learned men in that period for the attainment and interchange of knowledge, none was more cultivated or more effective for its end than epistolary correspondence; by means of which, the concert and stimulus which soon after began to be propagated by learned societies, was kept up by individual communications. For those, who like Boyle devoted themselves to knowledge, such a resource was then of primary consideration, and, to a great extent, also supplied the place of books: the lights of science were uncertain and rare, and the ardent student of nature was on the watch for every gleam. Boyle was not remiss in seeking the enlightening intercourse of those who were the most eminent for worth and learning.

In 1645, during the civil wars, a small company of persons of talent and learning were in the habit of meeting in London first, and afterwards, when London became too troubled for peaceful studies, in Oxford. The object of their meetings was to hold conversations and make communications in natural philosophy. This was the first beginning of that most illustrious institution the Royal Society, and consisted of many of those who were its most eminent members—Wallis, Wren, Ward, Wilkins, &c.,—men, among whom, at Mr Boyle's time of life, it was, in the highest degree, an honour to be included. They were the followers of Bacon, and the immediate precursors of Newton. The light of human reason had been long struggling, vainly, to break forth from the overpowering control of the spiritual despotism of the middle ages; and in Italy, a succession of minds of the first order, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, with his contemporaries, had arisen, in vain, above the dim twilight of school and cloister—though not permitted to be the lights of science, yet condemned to leave indelible illustrations of the power of superstition and slavery, and of the importance of freedom of thought to the advancement of mankind. This vital element had found its place in England: the reformation of religion was also the rectification of reason, and the spirit of the venerable fathers of modern science was now to shine out in the daylight of freedom, unfettered by any impositions save those limits assigned by him from whom reason is the gift to man. The eminent men whom we have mentioned had agreed upon weekly meetings at each other's lodgings; they also sometimes met in Gresham College. Their meetings were interrupted after the death of Charles, when London, for a time, became the seat of crime and anarchy, and especially unsafe for those who did not wish to go the fullest lengths of compliance with the spirit of the hour. The principal portion of the members retired to Oxford. The result of the connexions thus formed was a more determinate direction to the philosophical taste, and, perhaps, an increased impulse to the extraordinary assiduity with which Mr Boyle devoted

himself to investigations which have conferred upon his name a distinguished place in the history of natural philosophy.

The close and sedentary habits, consequent on such assiduous study, were not without their debilitating effects upon Boyle's corporeal frame. Before he was yet of age he became subject to repeated attacks of that most afflicting disease, the stone.

In 1652, he came over to settle his affairs in Ireland, and remained for a considerable time, but complained very much of the great obstacles which baffled his efforts to make a progress in his favourite investigations in chemical science. Still his unrelaxing ardour found a congenial pursuit in anatomy, and he entered on a course of dissection, under the guidance of Dr William Petty, physician to the army. Of this, he says, "I satisfied myself of the circulation of the blood, and have seen more of the variety and contrivances of Nature, and the majesty and wisdom of her Author, than all the books I ever read in my life could give me convincing notions of."

In 1654, he executed an intention, which he had long meditated, of retiring to Oxford, where his chief associates in study still met; and where he could with more ease pursue his favourite inquiries in science. It was their custom to meet at each other's apartments or dwellings, in turn, to discuss the questions of principal interest at the time, mutually communicating to each other the result of their several labours. They called themselves the Philosophical College, and perhaps were not without some sense of the important results to which their studies were afterwards to lead. They principally applied themselves to mathematical, and, still more, to experimental inquiries in natural philosophy. Among this distinguished body, the nucleus of modern philosophy, Boyle was not the least active or efficient. Of his labours, we shall presently speak more in detail. He seems to have been early impressed by the discoveries and the opinions declared by the Florentine philosophers, and directed his investigations with a view to confirm and follow out their discoveries: the result was a very considerable improvement upon the air-pump, a machine invented very recently by Otto of Guericke, a burgomaster of Magdeburg. Endowed with faculties, in the very highest degree adapted to the purposes of experimental science, he pursued, confirmed, and extended the science of pneumatics, of which the foundations had been laid by Torricelli, Pascal, and Huygens.

During the same interval, while engaged with ardour essential to genius and natural to youth, in these captivating and absorbing pursuits, Boyle's just, comprehensive, and conscientious spirit was not turned aside from the still higher path which he had chosen for his walk through life. The same inquiring, docile, and cautious habits of mind, improved by the investigations of natural philosophy, were directed to the investigation of the sacred records. He made great progress in the acquisition of the Oriental tongues, and in the critical study of the Scriptures in their original languages. He composed an "Essay on the Scriptures," in which this proficiency is honourably illustrated. The exemplary zeal with which, amidst the multiplicity of his pursuits, and the distraction of severe disease, he gave his mind



to a pursuit, so apt to be overlooked by men intensely engaged in temporal pursuits, is very strongly expressed by himself. "For my part, reflecting often on David's generosity, who would not offer as a sacrifice to the Lord that which cost him nothing, I esteem no labour lavished that illustrates or endears to me that divine book, and think it no treacherous sign that God loves a man, when he inclines his heart to love the scriptures, where the truths are so precious and important that the purchase must at least deserve the price. And I confess myself to be none of those lazy persons who seem to expect to obtain from God a knowledge of the wonders of his book, upon as easy terms as Adam did a wife, by sleeping soundly." Of this spiritual frame of mind we shall find numerous and increasing proofs. During his residence at Oxford he was not less solicitous in his cultivation of, and intercourse with, the best preachers and ablest divines, than with those eminent philosophers who had associated themselves with him, and whose meetings were often held in his apartments. Pococke, Hyde, Clarke, and Barlow, were among his intimates and advisers in those studies, of which they were the lights and ornaments in their day. In common with the ablest and soundest of his literary associates, he warmly opposed the absurd scholastic method of philosophizing, which was the remains of the scholastic period, but was maintained under the abused name and sanction of Aristotle.

The reputation of his learning and sanctity was perhaps extended by his character as a philosopher, as well as by his illustrious birth. The lord chancellor Clarendon was among those who importuned him to enter upon holy orders; but Boyle, with the just and philosophical discernment, as well as the disinterestedness of his character, refused, upon the consideration that his writings in support of divine truth would come with more unmixed authority from one connected by no personal interest with its maintenance. So high at the same time was his reputation as a philosopher, that the grand duke of Tuscany requested of Mr Southwell, the English resident at his court, to convey to Mr Boyle his desire to be numbered among his correspondents.

In 1662, a grant of the forfeited impropriations in Ireland was obtained in his name, but without any previous communication with him. This he applied to the purposes of maintaining and extending the benefits of Christianity, by supporting active and efficient clergymen. In the same year he was appointed president of the Society for the propagation of the gospel in New England: a society which was, we believe, the origin of those societies for the same end, of which the results have been so diffusively connected with the more permanent and higher interests of the human race.

The philosophical works and investigations of Boyle, in the meanwhile, followed thick upon each other. The splendid progress of the physical sciences since his time have been, in every branch, such as to cast an undeserved oblivion over the able and intelligent inquirers who began the march of science in England. Though they were far in advance of their day, yet after all, their happiest advances were but ignorant conjectures, compared with the discoveries which may be said to have followed in their track. The fame of Hooke is lost in

the discoveries of Newton.\* Boyle is said to have suggested to this great man the first ideas of his theory of light, in an Essay containing "Considerations and Experiments concerning Colours." This was published in 1663, when Newton was in his twentieth year, and three years before he commenced those experiments to which the theory of colours is due. But Boyle's researches, directed by a true theory of the principles of inquiry, were full of true and just suggestions, of which, nevertheless, it is not a fair way of thinking, to attribute to them the discoveries of any subsequent inquirer. The same suggestions are, to a marvellous extent, presented to various minds with a coincidence which may be called simultaneous: they are, in truth, the product of the age, and of the reality of things. One true notion received will be similarly applied by nearly all minds of a certain order; and as principles of investigation and facts become matured and accumulated, it is rather the wonder how so many can differ than that so many should agree.

Mr Boyle was, at this period of life, exposed to the ridicule of persons of profligate or worldly temper, by the publication of some moral essay, under the title of "Occasional Reflections on different Subjects," which had been written in his younger days, and which, as might be expected from one of Mr Boyle's simplicity of mind, went to the fullest lengths† in the truths of moral and spiritual reflection. That the soundest reason should on these, as on all other subjects of thought, keep nearest to truth, would seem to be a natural consequence. But the mind of society is, to a large extent, enlisted in behalf of the follies and corrupt conventions by which the spirit of the world is kept in conceit with itself; and one of the consequences is the tacit proscription of numerous plain truths, which no one denies, and few like to have forced upon their attention. The formal admission and practical contempt of many truths have thus converted them into solemn trifles, destitute of their proper meaning and afforded to satire the keenest of its shafts, which is directed against everything at which the world desires to laugh, and would gladly look upon as folly. It has, in effect, no very profound air to say gravely what every one knows and no one heeds, and it will become nearly burlesque, if such things are solemnly put forth in the tone and manner of deep reflection—the more so, too, as it is always very common to meet amiable shallow triflers, who deal in commonplaces, because, in fact, they can talk on no other conditions. But it is easy to see how, to a deep

\* Newton probably took the thought of gravitation from Hooke. It is an interesting fact that Milton seems to have described the idea of solar attraction in the following lines:—

"What if the sun  
Be centre to the world, and other stars  
By his attractive virtue and their own  
Incited, dance about him various rounds?"

† Intense and serious minds seldom understand ridicule, and are, therefore, not unapt to walk unconsciously within its precincts. Ridicule is the great weapon of ignorance, shallowness, and vice; but it is wielded in the hands of wit and malice, and is, therefore, formidable.

thinker, whose mind is uncorrupted by the world, many great first truths, which are lost in the vague forms of proverbial commonplace, should start into an intense reality; and thus language, which has lost its sense to worldly wisdom, acquire a power beyond the conception of keen and shrewd deriders. Of this single-minded, earnest, and conscientious character was Mr Boyle, to whom the very title of the Supreme Being brought a sense of veneration, and a host of solemn and affecting truths, such as seldom in any way, and never very intensely, crossed the minds of those who exercised their wit upon his reflections. The author of *Hudibras* was one of these; he imitated Mr Boyle in "An occasional Reflection on Dr Charlton's feeling a Dog's Pulse, at Gresham College." Swift also wrote his "Pious Meditations on a Broomstick," in imitation of the same compositions.

The high reputation, both as a philosopher and a Christian, acquired by Mr Boyle, recommended him to the respect and favour of all that was high and honourable in the land. The provostship of Eton having become vacant, he was nominated by the king to that important station. This he declined, because he wanted no addition either to his rank or fortune. He had decided against taking holy orders, for a reason which we have always considered as having much weight: that the world, and still more the infidel portion of it, is more likely to be influenced by the more apparently disinterested Christianity of a layman, than by the professional zeal and testimony of a churchman. Mr Boyle had also a sense that his devotion to chemistry might be found inconsistent with the active duties of the college, as he would find it his duty to fulfil them.

He was, at the same period of his life, appealed to upon a controversy which then, and often since, has excited the attention of society. This was the question as to the supposed supernatural virtue of healing, which was supposed to reside in the person of a Mr Valentine Greatrakes. Both parties addressed their appeal to Mr Boyle, as the person of the age most fitted to give an authoritative opinion. We should enter here very fully into that curious subject, had we not to give a separate notice on it in the memoir of Mr Greatrakes, where we shall give it exclusive consideration. Suffice it here to say, that a letter was addressed to Mr Boyle, by a Mr Stubbe, in behalf of Greatrakes, and that he replied in another, which, deservedly, obtained great praise.

In 1667, when a severe attack was made upon the Royal Society, Mr Boyle took a prominent part in the defence. It was, in reality, the era of a great revolution in the intellectual world—when the contest between the darkness of the scholastic age and the light of the Newtonian day was at its maximum point of violence. The advocates of a master, who would have scornfully disclaimed them, supplied the want of reason in favour of the Aristotelian philosophy, by charging the new philosophy and its supporters with impiety. The charge was, indeed, unlucky; it appealed to prejudices, and placed truth itself in a false position. The sacred history, written in an early age of the world, and not designed for the chimerical and inconsistent purpose of teaching natural philosophy, used the language of mankind in its allusions to nature—the only medium by which it could continue in-



telligible through so many states of civilization. But as men theorized on nature, and came to various notions on the structure of the mundane system, it is evident that they would compare the language of holy writ with the conclusions of science. Hence difficulties would arise. To deal with these, or to prevent them, the jargon of the schools was a convenient, but most mischievous resource. It was virtually the means of arriving at any desired inference by verbal dexterity. Thus adopting as sacred revelations, the indispensable language of the Bible, it preserved an erroneous system of physics, by excluding the consideration of phenomena. The mistake of the ancient writers on this head was two-fold; for, the scripture was not only understood to declare an accurate system of the world, but its language was so interpreted as to convert the prevalent philosophy of the age into the intent and meaning of the sacred text. Thus, unhappily, arose the self-perpetuation of error: it perverted scripture; and erected the perversion into sacred authority. When the reason of mankind became more free, another evil result arose: the fallacies which were thus wedded to the Bible, by old and venerated error, could not be easily divorced, and became a fertile ground for the sophistry of the deist. And yet, in a philosophic age, it seems strange that sophisms so obvious should have been ventured. It ought, indeed, to be observed that even the latest works on astronomy are liable to the very same misinterpretations; for, from the difficulty and complication of the subject, it is found necessary to adopt a fictitious convention, founded on appearances, as an indispensable necessity of language. And that fiction is *the very same* which the philosophers and divines of ages imagined to be a system maintained on the authority of scripture—which contained no system, and disclosed not one single fact in nature. For the purpose, it should, indeed, have contained some other books, bigger than itself, of pure and unmingled mathematics. Nor would it be very possible to fix a limit where God should cease to reveal, and reason begin its queries, cavils, and senseless mistakes and superstitions. The language of Laplace, of the vulgar of all ages, founded on the common principles of human language, is precisely that which the sacred penmen have used; because there never was, or will be, any other. The secret that the truth of God needs no veil of consecrated error—and that his word stands aloof and undefiled by the rashness of theories, or the fanaticism of schools—was as far from being understood as the Baconian philosophy. As a theory of metaphysics, the inductive method might be suffered to pass among other subtle speculations: speculation had, indeed, so little connexion with practice, that there was nothing very formidable in any effort of this nature—it was simply a great book to swell the mass of academic lucubration. But it was a different thing when a new race of inquirers arose, and, throwing aside the endless and inconclusive resources of division, distinction, syllogism, and definition, stretched beyond, and mistaken in their use, and began to weigh and measure, compare, compound, and analyze, and seek for the constitution of nature by a diligent and searching examination of nature itself. Such a new and daring course would not only assail the learned repose of universities, and deprive grave

doctors of much cheap-won wisdom, but it also gave a violent shock to that factious zeal with which systems are so much upheld. Hence it was that where reason failed, it was an easy, though most unfortunate, resource of controversy, to call in the aid of an appeal such as that we have described, and bring holy writ to the aid of the Aristotelians. The error has been propagated down to our times, checking science, and abusing scripture. The Royal Society was its first object. Mr Boyle was personally treated with the respect of his antagonists—a remarkable testimony to his reputation for piety and worth. A friend of his, who was a leading writer in the controversy, notices him in this honourable manner: that he “alone had done enough to oblige all mankind, and to erect an eternal monument to his memory; so that had he lived in the days when men godded their benefactors, he could not have missed one of the first places among their deified mortals; and that in his writings are to be found the greatest strength and the sweetest modesty, the noblest discoveries and the most generous self-denial, the profoundest insight into philosophy and nature, and the most devout and affectionate sense of God and religion.”

In the following year he changed his residence from Oxford to London, where he took up his quarters with the lady Ranelagh his sister. The change facilitated his communication with the Royal Society, and with learned men. As was usual, he continued to produce and send forth essays on various branches of natural philosophy; chiefly, however, upon subjects connected with the properties of air and water. In 1670, he published a work containing a more detailed account of his philosophical speculations and discoveries. This work obtained very general notice, and we can have no hesitation in saying, that it gave a vast impulse to chemical inquiry.

In 1671, his health, ever very delicate, received a severe shock from a paralytic disease. He, nevertheless, recovered, it is said by the adoption of a strict regimen, with the help of medical treatment.

Among the very numerous tracts which he every year published, there was, in 1674, a paper read in the Royal Society on “quicksilver growing hot with gold,” which drew a letter from Newton to caution him against any premature disclosure on a fact apparently so favourable to Alchemy. Mr Boyle seems not altogether to have abandoned some of these notions more properly appertaining to that visionary science: this was, however, both natural, and even philosophically just, in the commencement of a science of which it was the origin. Alchemy had already produced a rich accumulation of facts, and it was impossible to decide where the true line was to be found between reality and conjecture. Though it is the spirit of inductive science to question nature, by means of experiment and observation, it is plain that there must be some previous process of conjecture to give the direction to inquiry. The true principle of conjecture is, that it should be directed by knowledge; as, out of ascertained facts, various probabilities arise to exercise the invention and sagacity of the inquirer. Laws of nature rise slowly to observation, and with them the law of observation and inference grows both stricter and surer. To venture to assume these limiting rules prematurely, would have been a fatal error; and even still it would be hard to fix the bounds of the unknown, and

therefore mysterious processes of nature. We cannot affirm that mankind may not, in the course of half a century, have ascertained not only numerous new and unknown properties, such as to give an entirely new aspect to the laws supposed to be those of nature, but have discovered results which must be concluded to indicate further elementary laws as yet unknown. But there is a sound rule, of which we shall have much occasion to speak further—it is this; that there is a certain perceptible analogy in the operations of nature, which it is chimerical and visionary to depart from, but within which the utmost latitude of conjecture may and even must be allowed, even to the apparent verge of extravagance. A known operation, working according to an ascertained law, may, according to this principle, be carried in experiment to any extreme length against which human ignorance has set up its canon of prejudice; because, in fact, there is nothing can be pronounced impossible, unless for some specific reason on the most rigidly ascertained grounds. On the other hand, to violate this analogy would be to take improbability for the guide of science; to neglect it would be to take chance, and drift upon the ocean of non-existence. The reader of these remarks cannot fail to keep in view, that their application is not to the grounds of strict inference, which, to have any value, must be derived by the strictest reasoning from the most rigid facts; but to the grounds of probable conjecture which is the guide of trial. In Mr Boyle's day, the founders of modern science might justly entertain a salutary terror against the visions of the empirical philosophy, founded as they were upon a mixture of superstition, lawless fancies, traditionary dogmas, crude hypotheses, and premature generalizations. And as human reason is ever oscillating to extremes, the new impulse would naturally lead the followers of Galileo and Bacon to take a narrow basis for their views in science; and in departing from the visionary fields of the old hermetic science, leave behind some solid and valuable truths. Looking on the subject with these reflections, we are rather led to admire the tempered and considerate spirit of Mr Boyle, than to qualify his character by the admission of an enthusiasm for the occult and mystical, which seems to have tinged his zeal and led him further into speculative inquiry than he would have gone in the next generation. With or without such a qualification—the extent, variety, and soundness, of his investigation, placed natural philosophy on a firm and broad foundation, and gave the great impulse, from which numerous inquiries of far less genius have since obtained higher celebrity.

The very titles of some of his works convey the sound election with which he observed the errors and obstructions of human inquiry, which impeded, and even still, in some measure, continue to impede natural science. Of this nature may be specified his "Free Inquiry into the vulgar notion of Nature;" and his "Disquisition into the final causes of natural things, and with what caution a naturalist should admit them."

It appears that several of his writings were lost by various causes, among which there occurs one not now very easy to apprehend. It is stated by himself, that he had lost numerous manuscripts by the surreptitious depredation of visitors. In 1686, he published some state-



ments of the various obstacles he had met with, and the difficulties which he had encountered in the publication of his writings. This is now chiefly important as one of the numerous indications of a state of literature altogether different from that of more recent times. It is now not very far from the truth to say, that the universal sense of literary men is one which would suggest an apology of an opposite purport from that of Mr Boyle's; and indeed, there are few prefaces which do not contain some implication of the kind. A modern writer may perhaps feel, with some reason, that he has to account for the public appearance, in which the public is but little or not at all interested; but Mr Boyle felt the solemn duty of one to whom it was committed to enlighten and instruct an age of great comparative ignorance. His apology indicates the entire absence of those sentiments of egotism and arrogance, of which such an apology might now be regarded as the language. But it is to be admitted that, in this respect, the claim of the scientific inquirer yet stands upon a peculiar ground; the successful prosecutor of discoveries must always possess a claim upon the mind of his age: he owes something to the world, and the world something to him—he stands apart, because he is in advance of his age—his appeal is the assertion of a duty, not the boast of a merit, or a demand for the admiration of the world. Such claims as Mr Boyle had to the respect and gratitude of his age, were then accompanied by much anxiety, and the sense of a jealous and earnest competition. The whole structure of science was to be built—and as the ignorance of nature had, till then, been occasioned by an entire perversion in the method and direction of the human mind—there was a wide waste of obvious phenomena which lay upon the surface, ready to offer themselves to the first glances of rightly directed inquiry. It was a consequence that, among the philosophers of the age, there was a jealous competition. In this was, then, first displayed that unscrupulous disregard to truth and justice, which has in so many instances disgraced foreign philosophers, who have shown an unpardonable readiness to appropriate the inventions and discoveries of English science. The reader will recollect the great controversy concerning the fluxionary or differential calculus, of which this was the period. Similarly, Mr Boyle had to complain of numerous instances in which he was the object of similar frauds. Many copied his writings without any citation of authority, or stated his experiments in their books as if they had made them themselves.

A life of indefatigable research and study could not fail to affect the extremely delicate constitution of Mr Boyle. Great temperance, and continual caution which is mostly enforced by so tender a frame, had perhaps made the most of his strength. But he at last felt it due to science, and essential to his ease and health, to restrict his labours, and to avoid all superfluous engagements. He seems to have been deeply impressed with that sense of the value of time which belongs to those who have great and permanent objects of pursuit, and an earnest desire to accomplish the truer and worthier ends of existence. The broad ocean of discovery, too vast for even the contemplation of the highest human reason, or for the mind of ages, lay yet untried in all its magnificent expanse before his mind's eye: he could anticipate

numerous tracts of research, and doubtless conceive numerous splendid results, which human life would be short to follow or attain. Such a sense is more penurious of its hours than the miser of his gold: the gold may be accumulated, but the measured moments can neither be increased nor recalled. As most men live, it is true that an hour gained or lost would be but a little more or less of a useless commodity; while to one like Boyle it was truly more than wealth could compensate: some such sentiment suggested the aphorism of Bacon, *ars longa, vita brevis*. Mr Boyle, whose labours were the practical illustration of Bacon's philosophy, left also an illustrious example of the strictest economy of time. Zealous in the pursuit of important truths, he saw that, with his diminished energies, and diminishing days, it was necessary to cut off all superfluities, and avoid all uncalled-for waste of time and labour. With this view he ceased drawing up those formal communications to the Royal Society, which but interrupted the business of investigation, led to premature discussion, and broke in upon the settled frame of his thoughts. With much regret he resigned his office of governor to the corporation for propagating the gospel in New England. He published an advertisement declining the numerous visits to which his great celebrity exposed him; and put up a board to indicate the hours when he could receive those whom he could not, or would not, refuse to see. For these he set apart two mornings and two evenings in each week.

He availed himself of the leisure thus obtained, not only to prosecute his important investigations, but to repair the loss of many valuable papers, and to put the whole in a more convenient and systematic order.

In 1691, Mr Boyle's health, which had never been strong, began to give way to such an extent, that he concluded it full time to prepare for his end, and executed his last will. The rapid indications of a failure of the powers of life increased through the summer, and in October were so far advanced that no hope remained of any very decided restoration. His decline was considered to have been accelerated by his extreme concern about the illness of his dear sister, the lady Ranelagh, with whom he had ever lived on terms of the tenderest attachment. And as they had been united through life, they were not to be painfully disunited by the grave. Lady Ranelagh died on the 23d of December, 1691; and on the 30th of the same month, she was followed by her brother: a man who, if regard be had to the combination of high philosophic genius, moral worth, and genuine Christian goodness, has not been equalled, in any known instance, in succeeding generations. Holding a foremost place among the philosophers of that age, he was equally prominent, and still more deserving of veneration and honour as a Christian. With a spirit too wise to desire the adventitious honours which had been showered, with a liberal hand, on all the members of his family, and were pressed by royal favour on his acceptance—he refused to obscure with a title that name which continues to be the grace and ornament of the records of a family which has produced many persons of worth and public distinction.

He was, in a high degree, instrumental in the propagation of the

gospel: for this purpose his influence and fortune were used with energy and perseverance. He spent £700 upon the Irish translation of the Bible—of which he sent 500 copies into Ireland, and 200 into the highlands of Scotland. He also had printed, at his own expense, 3000 catechisms and prayer-books, for the highlands—of which the spiritual welfare had been deplorably neglected. He gave £300 for spreading the gospel in America.

We have already mentioned his foundation of a lecture for the defence of revealed religion, of which the object was thus expressed: "To be ready to satisfy real scruples, and to answer such new objections and difficulties as might be stated, to which good answers had not been made," &c. The fruits of this noble institution have been rich: such men as Bentley, Harris, Clarke, Whiston, and Butler, form a constellation of bright lights in the train of the noble founder; and, doubtless, far more illustrious has been the result which lies beyond the estimate of human praise—"the turning of many to righteousness;" for, considering that such minds are endowed by heaven, and such efforts commanded to man, we cannot suppose them to be ineffectually employed. But we may here pause to dwell on the characteristic sagacity which planned such a lecture. In any other department of knowledge it might be presumed that one full statement of an argument, of which all the facts are so long and so fully known as those of Christianity, might be enough to put an end to all doubts and further arguments in one way or another. But the natural aversion of irreligious minds to the gospel has the very peculiar, though obviously natural effect, of leading men to find arguments to satisfy themselves with a perfect ignorance of its nature, facts, and evidences. There is a dislike to be convinced, peculiar to this one great argument: and hence the fertility of human invention in devising such arguments as may shut out all chance of disturbing the illusions of scepticism; that is, all such arguments as are independent of the question itself, and are, therefore, without limit. A curious consequence of this is, that every generation has brought forth its own peculiar form of infidelity; some argument of which the absurdity has become too manifest to be relied upon, even by the sceptics of the next. This curious illustration of the real elementary principle of scepticism, seems to have been contemplated in Mr Boyle's foundation.

As a philosopher, there is now some difficulty in doing strict justice to Boyle. His writings have been superseded by the completion, or the far advance which has been made in those branches of natural philosophy to which he mainly applied his attention. But it will be enough to say, that all the most eminent inquirers in the same track,—such as, for instance, Priestley—have spoken of him as the founder of the important science of pneumatics. The testimonies of foreign philosophers are also numerous and important. He was, in England, the first follower of Bacon; and, though the branches of science which he cultivated by no means claim so high a rank, yet he may be called the predecessor of Newton, and that illustrious host of mathematicians who commenced and brought to perfection the noblest structure of knowledge that has been, or can be attained, by human powers. He must be viewed as the most eminent man in England, among those



who effected a great revolution in human knowledge; which was no less than a transition from the scholastic to the experimental schools—from mere words to facts. Of this great change the beginnings are, doubtless, to be traced to previous generations and other countries; but it would lead to wide digression to say more here upon a topic which we shall have frequent occasions to notice more at large.

We shall, therefore, conclude this sketch of Boyle, by a mere enumeration of his scientific writings. They are as follow:—

1. "New Experiments, Physico-Mechanical, touching the Spring of the Air, and its Effects, 1660." 2. "Sceptical Chemist, 1662;" reprinted in 1679; with the addition of *Divers Experiments*. 3. "Certain Physiological Essays and other Tracts, 1661." 4. "Considerations touching the Usefulness of Experimental Philosophy, 1663." 5. "Experiments and Considerations upon Colours, 1663." 6. "New Experiments upon Cold, 1665." 7. "Hydrostatical Paradoxes, 1666." 8. "Origin of Forms and Qualities, according to Corpuscular Philosophy, 1666." 9. "The Admirable Refractions of the Air, 1670." 10. "The Origin and Virtue of Gems, 1672." 11. "The Relation between Flame and Air, 1672." 12. "On the Strange Subtilty, Great Efficacy, &c., of Effluvia, 1673." 13. "The Saltness of the Sea, Moisture of the Air, &c., 1664." 14. "On the Hidden Qualities of the Air, 1674." 15. "The Excellence, &c., of the Mechanical Hypothesis, 1674." 16. "Porosity of Bodies, 1684." 17. "Natural History of Mineral Waters, 1684." 18. "Experimenta et Observationes Physicæ, 1691," which was the last work published during his life. But two posthumous works afterwards were published, viz., "Natural History of Air, 1692;" and "Medicinal Experiments, 1718."

## Valentine Greatrakes.

BORN A.D. 1628.—DIED CIRC. A.D. 1690.

THE claim of Mr Greatrakes to our notice is very peculiar, and such as, considering the very justifiable prepossessions of the reasonable class of men against all pretensions to which the term of quackery has been, or can be applied—it will, perhaps, be in some degree hazardous to notice with the equitable spirit of philosophic indifference. The great celebrity which he obtained in his day is, perhaps, characteristic of that day. It extended from the hut of the Irish peasant to the court of England, and furnished matter for wonder and discussion to philosophers and universities. But we are happy to seize the occasion which is thus offered of discussing an important topic which stands in some need of sober and impartial comment.

On the incidents of the life of Greatrakes we shall consult the utmost brevity. He is himself the authority for his early history. He was born in 1628, and was the son of William Greatrakes, of Affanche, in the county of Waterford. His mother was a daughter of Sir E. Harris, knight, and a judge in the king's bench. He was educated at the free school of Lismore, and designed for the university; but this destination was frustrated by the great rebellion which broke out

in his fourteenth year. He took refuge with his uncle, Mr E. Harris, who attended to the completion of his education with laudable diligence, and, as he says, "perfected him in humanity and divinity."

At the restoration, Mr Greatrakes was made clerk of the peace for the county of Cork, and a magistrate, and discharged the duties of these offices so as to obtain the respect of the district.

In the midst of such avocations, he became suddenly seized with an impression that he was personally endowed with some healing virtue: this incident must be related in his own words:—"About four years since I had an impulse which frequently suggested to me that there was bestowed on me the gift of curing the king's evil, which for the extraordinariness thereof, I thought fit to conceal for some time; but, at length, I told my wife; for whether sleeping or waking, I had this impulse; but her reply was, 'that it was an idle imagination.' But, to prove the contrary, one William Maher, of the parish of Lismore, brought his son to my wife—who used to distribute medicines in charity to the neighbours—and my wife came and told me that I had *now* an opportunity of trying my impulse, for there was one at hand that had the evil grievously in the eyes, throat, and cheeks; whereupon I laid my hands on the places affected, and prayed to God, for Jesus' sake, to heal him. In a few days afterwards the father brought his son so changed that the eye was almost quite whole; and to be brief (to God's glory I speak it), within a month he was perfectly healed—and so continues."

It is then stated that he proceeded to discover, and to display to the wonder of the whole surrounding country, a power of healing which was so great and so evident in its effects as to silence even the scepticism of physicians. And so great became his fame that crowds flocked around his dwelling, from all parts of the country, and filled his barns and out-houses with diseases of every kind. His fame soon spread to England, and he was invited over to cure lady Conway of an obstinate headache. In England, he was followed by multitudes: he failed to afford the desired relief to the lady Conway, but was successful in curing numbers of the poor people.

The practice of Mr Greatrakes was wholly gratuitous, and the power by which he effected his cures he attributed to a supernatural gift. In England, such pretensions soon led to public discussion—in which two parties took opposite views, both in a very high degree worthy of being noticed, as examples of two unphilosophical modes of solution which derive considerable importance from the frequency with which they may be observed to recur in the history of human opinion—one party at once attributing the cures to some supernatural gift, the other resolving the difficulty by some conjectural cause. Of these, the first assumes that all the operations and powers which are termed natural, are so thoroughly known that anything which cannot be accounted for, or resolved into an effect of some known cause, must be called supernatural. The other, still more absurd, escapes the difficulty by assigning some known but inadequate cause, which amounts to no more than giving a name to a thing, and then explaining it by that name. Thus, while Mr Stubbe wrote a pamphlet, in which he described the healing power of Greatrakes as a gift bestowed by God,

and with curious inconsistency described the elementary operation of the supposed gift—his adversaries attributed it to the power of friction, neglecting to observe, that if friction had anything to do with the cures supposed, it must be as the means of setting in motion some other cause, without a knowledge of which nothing was explained.

Mr Boyle was appealed to, and he appears to have viewed the question with the temperate and impartial mind of a philosopher—which is to be neither hasty to affirm nor deny. He admitted the possibility of miraculous gifts, because he found no absolute reason to deny it: but, considering the description of the actual facts, he saw no reason to class them as miracles: he justly observed, and the observation is very important, that they were wholly dissimilar from the miracles related in Scripture. He did not deny that there might be some mechanical cause, or some healing virtue applicable by the touch of the hand, especially considering the known powers of the imagination. And he illustrated his reasoning by examples of cures performed by the immediate and direct effect of this influence.

As subsequent controversies have given very considerable importance to the principles involved in this question, we shall not leave it without making some general remarks; and in doing this we shall, to the utmost extent, avoid the slightest leaning to the controverted opinions of any class of persons. It may be unnecessary to mention, that the main form in which these considerations have been latterly involved, has been the great controversy concerning mesmerism; or as it has been recently termed, animal magnetism.

On the facts, concerning which these questions have arisen, we are no further acquainted than by hearsay. But as they are not authoritatively contradicted, their reality may for the present purpose be *assumed*. Both parties have, so far as we have had cognizance, joined issue on the facts, and are at variance upon the law. We only design to notice here, the errors in reason which they have committed—what may become of the question concerning mesmerism, is a matter of great comparative unimportance: it is our object to guard the integrity of reason which is so apt to suffer grievously in the heat of such disputes.

Against those who have been the assertors or practitioners of mesmerism, two objections are to be made, neither of which demand much comment,—that of imposture, and that of premature theorizing. On the first, we must be very brief: we have not personally had any experience of the facts commonly alleged; they have been affirmed on very strong authority, and submitted to every test of which they seem capable. Some of them appear to admit of no deception. And it ought to be observed that, among the most intelligent of their opponents admissions have been directly or indirectly made, which amount to the concession of all that can be contended for short of idle speculation. The other charge is, indeed, but too well warranted against both sides; it rests on that common infirmity of human reason, which has from the beginning of time loaded human knowledge with the encumbrance of idle speculations. The almost universal fallacy of assuming that every thing known is to be explained by the best conjecture that occurs. Accordingly, the magnetists have in their tracts upon the subject, so amply involved their very debatable facts in such idle reasonings as



very much to multiply their vulnerable points, and to raise questions on which they can be assailed beyond the power of effective defence. When the ridiculous reason, or the absurd pretence, is exposed, the multitude, equally shallow in its scepticism as in its credulity, will easily be induced to overlook the facts. The charge of *sleight*, or imposture, is as effective as any other explanation—it is at least as cheap as a miracle.

Against the adversaries of the magnetists, the charges to be made are the hasty denial of facts; and the opposition of these facts, so far as admitted, by fallacies and evasions.

Of those who deny facts, simply on the ground that they are impossible, or that they have not witnessed them, there is nothing to be said—they are unreasonable, and not to be met by reason. The most respectable opponents of mesmerism are those who, admitting the facts so far as they have been actually ascertained by competent trial and observation, have considered it as a sufficient argument to silence all further consideration of the subject, to find a name for them, or to refer them to some known natural cause; and then take it for granted that there is nothing further, and assert that the whole matter is undeserving of further notice.

In the reign of Louis XVI. of France, the question was referred to a committee of professional men, who completely put an end to the question for the time, by referring the phenomena to *imitation*. This was explained by the fact of that species of sympathy which is known in numerous cases to take place in the human mind and body. The argument has been since taken up, and received various improvements of the same character—nervous influence has been of some use, and the mere agency of the imagination has been of still more. And, finally, in our own times, it has been thought full sufficient reason against the magnetists to say that the phenomena are no more than disease.

Now, what renders all this deplorably fallacious is, that every one of these objections may be fully admitted, and still leave every question worthy of consideration untouched. Imitation, as an act of the will, to which it may be referred as a cause, is not the kind of imitation intended: involuntary imitation is but an effect to be accounted for, and which can explain nothing. If the phenomena are such as to be properly called imitative, it neither tells nor explains to say that they are the effects of imitation; this is still but the very fact to be explained. If, however, a further step is taken towards the discovery of an efficient cause, and that nervous sympathy, or the influence of imagination be considered as such; the first point would be to trace the indications of these several causes in the actual phenomena; when this is done, it will remain to be proved that anything is gained in the controversy. The same may be said with greater force of the objection, that the phenomena in question are nothing but disease. The answer to all these is, that the phenomena of mesmerism or magnetism, are altogether independent of any theory by which their explanation may be attempted: they may be nervous, or some form of disease; but, if it can be proved that such facts have real existence, there is nothing to justify the charge of imposture maintained by

an explanation, which, if it has any force, proves something different. Our objection to such a course is this, that a presumed imposture is resisted by a gross fallacy. Before we leave this part of the subject we must observe of the methods of solution to which we have here adverted, that many of the alleged facts are such as to exclude altogether both imitation and imagination, and every other known agency. That the same facts are justly referred to certain diseased states of the mind or body, of which they are the known symptoms, presents a different question on which we have some remarks to offer.

Now, supposing the charge of mere imposture abandoned (as we believe it to be), by the most reasonable opponents; and the far more just objection made, that the effects in question are disease—that the practice is dangerous—and, though not imposture in one sense, yet is a most pernicious resource in the hands of quacks and other impostors. This may be very true, and if so cannot be answered. But, in the meantime, it does not justify the course which has been followed with regard to magnetism. It was not, perhaps, so much amiss in the time of Louis XVI., when investigation was limited, and authority despotic, to put down a pernicious practice by any means. But neither conclave, college, nor court, can now exercise the smallest influence to arrest the expansive curiosity and intelligence of the human mind—the tricks of night are too visible in the full daylight of reason. Such ineffectual opposition can only awaken resistance from the multitudes who wonder at magnetism, and the few who respect reason. Let the really rational opponents of magnetic experiments take a more open and philosophic course.

If the practice of magnetism is really pernicious, this is surely the *practical* ground to take against it; but this cannot effectually be taken by those who treat it as a fiction. Surely they who should have the leading voice in such a question, have put themselves inadvertently in a position from which the sooner they extricate themselves the better.

But if the allegations of so many of the most authoritative witnesses are—as we are here taking for granted—really true, there is a wider view of the subject.

If in any one single case out of a thousand trials—for the number of failures is of no real importance—any one of the most remarkable phenomena of mesmerism is actually produced, as a natural phenomenon, it is not less worthy of notice and investigation, than if the trial should succeed in every instance. The small class of facts, thus observed—supposing no defect in the observation—would be the certain indications of some principle, or of some process in human nature, beyond the limit of that circle of cause and effect hitherto ascertained. Such an extension of our knowledge would be rejected by no true philosophy. In such a supposition it is vain and absurd to pretend that all further questions, concerning such facts, must end by referring them to disease, or imagination, or nerves. None of which causes even make a seeming approach towards the explanation of the facts. If, for instance, there is a state of disease in which the patient becomes cognizant of things existing and passing elsewhere, and not otherwise known, it may be catalepsy; but it is evident that the symptom indicates some process beyond the ordinary range of human faculties, as

yet otherwise known. It is at once evident that no mental or physical cause yet distinctly known, named, or classed, in any department of natural phenomena, can account for it. It cannot be sympathy or imagination, or nervous affection, in any sense yet intelligibly contained in these words.

But it may, perhaps, be inexplicable—so is every fact in nature beyond some point—but, it is enough that it is, if truly stated, a fact which extends our knowledge of our intellectual constitution, by proving that it contains capabilities and provisions which are developed in certain states of disorder, more powerful in action and range than any known in health, and wholly *different in kind*. It surely manifests the *existence* of a function, and a capability which extends our knowledge of the human mind. If disease can develop some new sense, the provision is probably designed for some use beyond disease by the great Creator, who can scarcely be presumed to have made so elaborate a provision for the information of a cataleptic patient.

There is an objection which we have heard with concern and surprise. Some good men have expressed their fear, that the miracles of the Scripture history might be attributed to animal magnetism. When we recall the reasonings of the deist, we cannot but admit that such a fallacy would not be too absurd. The first principle of scepticism is the confusion of distinctions; and this, though it would be a most egregious instance, would not be one of the worst. But such an oversight can only, for a moment, be indulged in by those who are in the habit of arguing on the sacred narrative without having taking the trouble to look into it; as the miracles of either the Old or New Testament are not such as to admit of explanation either by magnetism or any other natural means—and must be wholly fable, or wholly supernatural.

As for the cures practised, or supposed to be practised, by Great-rakes, and others since his time—we believe that, in part, they may be safely attributed to the influence of the imagination. That they may also, to some extent, be attributable to the same influence as animal magnetism operating in some peculiar way, is not unreasonable to suspect. But, admitting the utmost as to the facts, we see no ground for the inference of any supernatural influence. It is easy to see, why such a power, in the possession of an individual, should in certain circumstances be made available for imposture; but we cannot admit that imposture is to be best resisted by the weapons of fraud, or by that more comprehensive class of fallacies which from the beginning of time have retarded all knowledge. Any delusion which extensively affects the public mind must, in these days of opinion, be fairly examined; and when it becomes for any reason worth while to investigate, it ought to be such a fair investigation as alone can bear any decided conclusion. It should never be forgotten, on such occasions, that nothing can be called impossible but that which directly contradicts itself or some known truth.

We have been led into this discussion by a remark, in which we agree, made by one of the writers of Mr Boyle's life, in commenting on the same facts. "It may in the present age, perhaps, be thought that Mr Boyle ought to have laid more emphasis on the power of



imagination over organized matter, and the effects of animal magnetism or enthusiasm, and rejected altogether the notion of supernatural influences."

Greatrakes was himself under the firm, and we believe sincere, persuasion, that his power of healing was a supernatural gift. Some attacked him as an impostor, while others endeavoured to account for his cures, by the theory of a "sanative contagion in the body, which has an antipathy to some particular diseases and not to others." Among other opponents, St Evremond assailed him in a satirical novel. In the main, however, the most respectable physicians and philosophers of the time supported him with testimonies, which we should now find it hard to reject. Among these were Mr Boyle, Bishop Rust, the celebrated Cudworth, Dr Wilkins, Dr Patrick, &c. The writer of a brief, but full memoir of Greatrakes in the *Dublin Penny Journal*, cites a long letter from lord Conway to Sir George Rawdon, in which he gives an account of a cure to which he was an eyewitness. The subject was a leper who had for ten years been considered incurable. He was the son of a person of high respectability, and brought forward by the bishop of Gloucester, which makes fraudulent conclusion improbable—the cure was immediate. The case is, therefore, as strong and as well attested as any such case is likely to be.

The celebrity thus attained by Greatrakes in England was very great. And Charles II. who invited him to London, recommended him very strongly.

There is, however, no record of the latter part of his life. He is traced in Dublin, in 1681, when he was about fifty-three years of age.

## Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon.

BORN A.D. 1633.—DIED A.D. 1684.

THE ancestry of this nobleman has been already noticed among these memoirs. He was son to the third earl of Roscommon, and by his mother, nephew to the illustrious earl of Strafford.

His father had been in the communion of the church of Rome, but was converted by Usher—so that he was educated as a protestant. His early years were wholly past in Ireland, and he first visited England when his uncle, the earl of Strafford, returned thither from his government, and carried him over to his seat in Yorkshire, where he placed him under the care of a Mr Hall, an eminent scholar. It is mentioned that, from this gentleman, he learned Latin without any previous instruction in grammar, of which it was found impossible to make him recollect the rules. The difficulty is, indeed, one of such frequent occurrence, that it is satisfactory to learn that his lordship was distinguished for the ease and purity of his Latin—in which he maintained a considerable correspondence.

The beginning of the civil wars made it unsafe to remain under the protection of the earl of Strafford, and, by the advice of archbishop Usher, he was sent to France. There was a Protestant university in Caen—here he studied for some time under the tuition of Bochart.

Having completed his course of study, he travelled through Italy, where he attained considerable skill in medals, and a perfect mastery of the language. He did not return to England till the restoration—he was favourably received by king Charles II., and made captain of the band of pensioners.

His intercourse with the dissolute court of Charles was productive of a hurtful effect upon his morals, and he abandoned himself for a time to excesses from which not many recover. He injured his estate by gambling, and is said to have fought many duels.

Some questions having arisen about a part of his property, he was compelled to visit Ireland, and resigned his post at court. The duke of Ormonde, soon after his arrival, made him captain of the guards. This post he soon resigned under the following circumstances,—as he was one night returning home from a gaming-house, he was suddenly set upon by three men, who, it is said, were hired for the purpose. He slew one of them, and a gentleman who was passing at the instant came to his assistance and disarmed another, on which the third ran away. The gentleman who thus seasonably had come to his aid, was a disbanded officer of excellent reputation, but in a condition of utter want. The earl, entertaining a strong sense of the important service to which he probably owed his life, determined to resign his own post in his favour, and solicited the duke for his permission. The duke consented, and the gentleman was appointed captain in his place.

He returned to England as soon as the arrangement of his affairs permitted. There he was appointed master of the horse to the duchess of York. He soon after married a daughter of lord Burlington.

From the time of his marriage he gave himself to literature, and became, as the reader is probably aware, one of the distinguished poets of that time. He was associated with all that was gifted and brilliant among the wits and poets of the town and court, and was joined with Dryden in a project for fixing the standard of the English tongue. The growing interruption of those ecclesiastical disturbances which had begun to disturb the peace of the kingdom, and, doubtless, brought serious alarm to a generation which yet retained the memory of the preaching soldiers of Cromwell—damped the ardour of literary projects, and made his lordship doubt the safety of England. He resolved to pass the remainder of his life in Rome, and told his friends, that “it would be best to sit next to the chimney when it smoked.” Dr Johnson has observed that the meaning of the sentence is obscure. We do not think many of our readers will join in this opinion: if any one should, he has but to call to mind the religious opinions of the king and his brother, and the projects which the duke was then well known to entertain for the restoration of the pope’s supremacy in England and Ireland.

The earl’s departure was obstructed by a fit of the gout. In his anxiety to travel, he employed some quack, who drove the disorder into some vital part; and his lordship died in January, 1684. He was interred in Westminster Abbey.

The poetry of the earl of Roscommon is no longer known. He seems, however, to have been the first who conceived any idea of that correct versification, and that precise and neatly turned line which was

brought afterwards to a state of perfection by Pope and his followers. As Johnson has justly said, "He is elegant, but not great; he never labours after exquisite beauties; and he seldom falls into gross faults. His versification is smooth, but rarely vigorous; and his rhymes are remarkably exact. He improved taste, if he did not enlarge knowledge, and may be remembered among the benefactors to English literature." He is also said, by the same great authority, to have been "the only correct writer of verse before Addison;" and cites a couplet from Pope, which pays him the higher tribute of having been the only moral writer in the licentious court of Charles. His great work was a Metrical Essay on Translated Verse. He also translated the *Arte Poetica*, from Horace. His translation of *Dies Iræ*, is among the happiest attempts which have been made upon that untranslatable hymn. Many of his lesser productions have been mentioned with applause.

### Sir James Ware.

BORN A.D. 1594.—DIED A.D. 1666.

AMONG those to whom Ireland is indebted for the collection and preservation of the most authentic materials for her history, no name can be placed above that of Ware. And we have to express regret that we are not more fully informed in the history of his life.

He was born 26th November, 1594, in Castle Street, in the city of Dublin. His father was auditor-general, with reversion to his son. At the age of sixteen he entered as a fellow-commoner in the university of Dublin: and took bachelor's and master's degrees at the usual times. The distinction which he maintained among his fellow-students, and, above all, the taste he early began to show for the study of antiquities, attracted the notice, and gained the friendship, of Usher, who was at the time professor of divinity in the university. Ware had early commenced his collections, and Usher's collection and library were open to him; as also that of Daniel Molyneux, Ulster king-at-arms.

In 1626, he went to London, and was introduced, by Usher, to Sir Robert Cotton, who opened to him his valuable and extensive collections and library. He also made laborious researches in the Tower and other state-paper offices and repositories, from all of which he obtained large treasures of original and important records—from which he made copious extracts and copies.

On his return home, he commenced those valuable labours, by which he is now best known; and published the first parts of the History of the Irish Bishops.

His second visit to London was in 1628, when his acquaintance with Seldon, and other eminent antiquarians, enabled him to enlarge his collections very considerably. In 1629, on his return to Ireland, he was knighted by the lords justices. In 1632, his father died, and he succeeded him as auditor-general. From the lord lieutenant, Wentworth, he obtained a seat in the privy council.

Though attentive to his public duties, Sir James Ware was not



remiss in the pursuit of his favourite studies. He soon after published "Spenser's View of the State of Ireland." He was at this time engaged in collecting accounts of the "Writers of Ireland." His well-known work under that title, came out in 1639.

In the troubled period which commenced in 1641, his conduct was, in the highest degree, praiseworthy. The following is the valuable testimony of the marquess of Ormonde. "Even when his majesty's affairs were most neglected, and when it was not safe for any man to show himself for them, he then appeared most zealously and stoutly for them."

In 1644, he was sent over to Oxford, as the fittest person to give the king an account of the state of Ireland, and to receive his commands on the negotiation then in progress. He availed himself of the occasion for his favourite pursuit. He was honoured by the university with a degree of doctor of laws. When returning, with despatches from the king, the packet in which he sailed was taken by a parliament ship. He was sent prisoner to London, and there committed to the Tower, where he remained for ten months—after which he was exchanged. He continued, in Dublin, to take a prominent part in the king's affairs, and was high in the confidence of the marquess of Ormonde. At the surrender of Dublin to the parliamentary commanders, in 1647, he was demanded as one of the hostages, and, as such, taken to London. On his return to Dublin his office was, of course, at an end, and he lived as a private person, until governor Jones banished him, by an order, to any place beyond seas except England. Sir James went over to France, where he resided successively at Caen and in Paris, still occupied with his antiquarian studies.

In 1651, his private affairs required his presence in England, whither he came, by parliamentary license; and, after a couple of years, went over to Ireland, to visit his estate.

During the whole of this interval, he was busy in the publication of his works, which were printed in England. The "Antiquities" came out in 1654; and four years after he published a second and improved edition.

On the Restoration, he was, at once, reinstated in his office of auditor-general, by Charles, to whom he had given a large sum of money in his necessity. At the election of parliament, he was chosen member for the university. He was, soon after, appointed one of the four commissioners for appeal in excise cases; and a commissioner for the settlement under the king's declaration.

He refused the king's offer of a title; but, according to Harris, obtained baronetcies for two of his friends.

His "Annals" were published next; and in 1665, the "History of the Irish Bishops" came out entire. But death cut short his projects of literature. He died on the 3d December, 1666, and was buried in his family vault in St Werburgh's church.

Several miscellaneous statements are given by Harris and others, of his uprightness, benevolence, and justice. He always refused his official fees from widows, the clergy, and their sons. He lived in a season of great distress, and exerted himself to the utmost for its relief. His house and table were a known refuge for the victims of reverse

and spoliation; and when he was given possession of some houses and tenements, forfeited for rebellion, he instantly sent for the widow and children of the forfeitee, and made a legal conveyance of the premises in their favour.

His works are known. They have a distinguished place in every library which has its shelf for the History of Ireland. They are valuable for their brief accuracy, and comprehensive extent—supplying the place of a guide and faithful sign-post to the student in a vast chaos of undigested literature. There are few of any real importance on the subject, of which the main outline will not be found among Ware's writings, with a happy freedom from theories, for which he had too little genius, yet too much common sense.

## Henry Dodwell.

BORN A.D. 1641—DIED A.D. 1711.

DODWELL was born in Dublin in 1641. He was educated in Trinity college, where he obtained a fellowship. He is to be commemorated for his extraordinary erudition, of which Gibbon has observed, "Dodwell's learning was immense. In this part of history, especially, nothing could escape him; and his skill in employing them is equal to his learning." From this most authoritative opinion, it might be inferred that his writings must have been important for their learning and extent of research: and such was the fact. He wrote several important dissertations on chronology. He was a party in the celebrated dispute on the epistles of Phalaris, and wrote "Two Dissertations on the Age of Phalaris and Pythagoras;" with many other works of great industry and research, which have not now sufficient importance for any distinct enumeration. He was, like many other great scholars, not equally gifted with the higher intellectual endowments: his opinions were eccentric, and his reasonings perplexed and inconclusive. Tillotson, whom he consulted on some of his theological writings, advised him against their publication, telling him, "such particulars are so perfectly false, that I wonder you do not perceive the absurdity of them." On the theology of such a thinker and reasoner it is unnecessary to dwell. A sufficient estimate of his character as a speculative writer, may, perhaps, not unfairly be formed from the title of one of his works: "An Epistolary Discourse, proving, from the Scripture and from the First Fathers, that the Soul is a Principle naturally mortal; but immortalized actually by the Pleasure of God, to Punishment or Reward, by its Union with the Divine Baptismal Spirit: Wherein it is proved that None have the Power of giving this Divine Immortalizing Spirit since the Apostles, but only the Bishops." Prefixed to this was a Dissertation to prove that "Sacerdotal Absolution is necessary for the Remission of Sins, even of those who are truly penitent." Such propositions were sure to draw forth abundance of refutation, and Dodwell was assailed from many a quarter. He defended himself in numerous tracts, and amply illustrated the saying of the Preacher, that "in many books there is much folly"—where the

student happens to have no wisdom of his own. Such writers as Dodwell are, indeed, chiefly to be commemorated, as manifesting by instances, the otherwise very attainable inference, that there is a very broad distinction between the talents which are available to accumulate, and those which can add anything to human knowledge. The eminence of Dodwell demands no discussion of his tenets. He was, however, conscientious and zealous both in conduct and feeling, and carried sincerity so far as to sustain the trials to which he was exposed by his principles. His fellowship was resigned, because he scrupled to enter into holy orders, as prescribed by the statutes of the college. He was appointed Camden professor of history in the university of Oxford; but was deprived, in 1691, on refusing to take the oaths to the new government,—a fact the more remarkable, as he was, for some time, chaplain in Holland to the princess of Orange, on the recommendation of Dr Lloyd, afterwards bishop of Worcester.

After the loss of his professorship, Dodwell retired to the country, and married at the age of fifty-two. In his retirement, he continued his literary labours, and produced the most useful and creditable of his writings, chiefly on the chronology of Roman authors and history.

He died at Shottsbrooke, in his seventieth year, in 1711.

## John Toland.

BORN A.D. 1669.—DIED A.D. 1722.

THE life of Toland derives its entire importance from the perversion of considerable ingenuity and shrewdness for the most pernicious ends: an eminence which would, nevertheless, not be considered of itself a sufficient claim to our notice, were he not recommended as one of the earliest of the modern deists. In this, as in all cases where the vindication of the first principles of philosophy, social order, or religious truth, become inextricably connected with the history of an individual, otherwise obscure, we shall hold ourselves exempt from the necessity of entering into superfluous details respecting his life, and direct our main consideration to the full statement and examination of his opinions.

The following are the main incidents of John Toland's life. He was born in 1669, at Inis Eogan, in the north of Ireland. His parents were of the church of Rome. He studied in Glasgow; but, in 1690, he took the degree of master of arts in Edinburgh. Having changed from the religion of his early life, he became a dissenter; and, travelling into England, his talent soon attracted the favourable notice of the dissenters, and he was recommended by some of their principal divines, as a fit person to become a teacher among them. With this view he was sent abroad, at the expense of the body which thus adopted him, to study theology at Leyden. After two years he returned, having devoted himself, with exemplary diligence, to his studies, and obtained some reputation for knowledge and ability. He soon retired to live in Oxford, where he could obtain access to books with facility, and there entered on the composition of his known work, "Christianity



Not Mysterious." On this he was for a considerable time employed, and it was not published till after his arrival in London in 1696. Its reception was such as might be well inferred by a sagacious reader of such a work. Toland had proceeded with caution: he was aware that by a certain degree of moderation in not pursuing his opinions to their full lengths, he might not only present a less assailable front to his opponents; but that he would even have a large portion of the nominal christian world on his side. The world, while its common sense and its formal respect for truth is shocked by open assaults upon christianity, is yet not displeased to have its authority lessened, and its pure and severe spirit lowered into conformity with the inferior standard which it is willing to adopt. Such was the apparent tendency of Toland's first attack; and it imposed on many good, and even upon some wise men. Such deceptions had, however, their foundation in the unhappy state of ignorance of the doctrinal system of scripture which then prevailed. As this ignorance must have failed to affect the opinions of churchmen, and of the christian portion of the community, Toland's book could not escape attacks, and a degree of reprobation adequate to its real demerits. And such were, in effect, the consequences. He was immediately assailed with merited severity: he was refuted in numerous publications, and prosecuted by law. Such prosecutions require, at least, very strong grounds to render them not injudicious. In all such cases, it is incumbent on the executive government to compute, with precision, the amount of the real consequences of the crime, or of the prosecution. It is, perhaps, only where the law is seconded by public opinion, that such a measure can ever have its proper consequences. This was not such a case; the spirit of the hour was in Toland's favour; the zeal for liberty of opinion was high, and that of religious feeling was low; and there was a temper of mind cultivated, which diverted the understandings of men like Molyneux and Locke from looking at the matter in its actual bearings. They looked on Toland, not as a wily foe to truths which they themselves held in veneration, but as one who, like themselves, was impatient of the shackles of ancient error, and who stood forth boldly to place christianity on the grounds of reason. In their views also there were errors which it would complicate this memoir to disentangle here—we shall come presently to their exposition.

For a time, and but for a time, Mr Locke was imposed upon by his own prepossessions and the dexterity of Toland; and he became his zealous supporter in the storm of opposition. Notwithstanding his zeal for freedom, and his love of toleration, and some incorrect tenets—which were, in a measure, the result of his temper of mind and his times—Mr Locke was soon awake to the dubious pretensions of the empiric; he took his part, but was too cautious to admit him to his intimacy. He was especially offended by the inordinate vanity which seems to have been the characteristic feature of Toland. Mr Locke's sagacity could not have been long deceived: every one, who is much conversant with mankind, will at once comprehend, that there are slight indications in the countenance, manner, gesture, and language, too fine to be distinctly described, or to find their way into any record, but which, like characteristic looks, at once strike the

knowing observer with a prescient impression of the real character of the person. And, above all, in such a character as Toland's will presently appear to have been, these indications are never wanting. The adventurer is ever marked by some of those fine irregularities of aspect and manner which are best designated by the term "scampish."

Toland came over to Dublin, where his fame had preceded him. He heard his book analyzed, and its intent exposed and refuted in the pulpit; and was, very generally, encountered with question and controversy. This was, however, rendered personally hurtful by the manner and temper in which it was met. The overweening vanity of the man led him to the display of arrogant pretensions, and to a rude and dogmatic disregard for time, place and person. The caution which, in some degree, guarded the pernicious absurdities of his book, was abandoned in colloquial discussion; and it is probable, too, that numerous unrecorded, but easily inferred, indications in his habits, such as we have already described, led to a more true and just appreciation of his real views. He gradually accumulated a body of opinion and feeling against himself, and the consequence is stated in a letter from Mr Molyneux to Locke:—"Mr Toland is, at last, driven out of our kingdom. The poor gentleman, by his imprudent management, had raised such an unusual outcry, that it was even dangerous for a man to have been known once to converse with him. This made all wary men of reputation decline seeing him—insomuch that, at last, he wanted a meal's meat, as I am told—and none would admit him to their tables. The little stock of money which he brought to this country being exhausted, he fell to borrowing from any one who would lend him half-a-crown; and ran in debt for his wigs, clothes, and lodgings, as I am informed. And, last of all, to complete his hardships, the parliament fell on his book—voted it to be burned by the common hangman—and ordered the author to be taken into custody by the serjeant-at-arms, and to be prosecuted by the attorney-general at law. Hereupon he is fled out of the kingdom, and none here knows where he has directed his course." We consider this account so far important, as it exhibits the real character of this wretched man—in whom no small intellectual powers were wasted and degraded. We are desirous to take the opportunity to illustrate an important first truth—that there is a nearer connexion than is, perhaps, generally suspected between moral virtue and right reason. With this consideration we shall not, however, interrupt our narrative, as it will find a more convenient place at the end of our memoir, when every part of the subject will have been distinctly stated.

From Dublin Toland proceeded to take refuge in London. There, comparatively secure in the obscurity of the throng, he digested the insults his vanity had sustained, and meditated vindictive attacks on the christian religion. His courage was not equal to his resentment. Not daring to give a direct blow to the object of his malice, he seems to have projected, from the first, what he considered the safer course. As he had commenced with a design to overthrow revealed religion under the pretext of friendship, by placing it in an assailable position, he next conceived the project of attacking it more directly under the pretext of arguments apparently unconnected with it. For this pur-

pose it was easy to find the pretext—the genuineness of the Icon Basilike presented precisely the occasion to misrepresent the evidences for the canon of scripture, without committing him directly on so dangerous a subject. Of course, however, in a country like England, the remotest and most dexterous falsification of the laws of evidence could not escape, nor could the cowardly artifices of sophistry be long permitted to lurk, under the cover of perfidious insinuation. Toland was quickly dragged to light by Dr Blackall, afterwards bishop of Exeter. He had the poverty of spirit to vindicate himself by falsehood, and asserted that it had been his design, not to attack, but to illustrate and confirm the canon of the scriptures.

The subject was introduced in the lower house of convocation, and five propositions were extracted from his former publication, “Christianity Not Mysterious”—on which the resolution was past, that, “in their judgment, the said book contained pernicious principles, of dangerous consequence to the christian religion; that it tended, and—as they conceived—was written on a design to subvert the fundamental articles of the christian faith,” &c. The resolution, of which this is a portion, was reported to the upper house, and it passed a resolution to prosecute the author. This course was prevented by the opinion of the law authorities consulted upon the occasion, that the convocation could not act without a license from the king. Toland had the weakness to triumph in such an escape; and, drawing the conclusion that he might now proceed more boldly, he began more freely to avow his genuine views.

It does not appear to us in any way necessary to waste our fast-contracting space, in detailing the political adventures of Toland. He was a political pamphleteer of great expertness and talent; and his character and abilities found their most appropriate level in party intrigue. Had the elements of his moral temper been of a higher and firmer order, and his career exclusively that for which his talents qualified him, we might, happily, have here a different and more agreeable duty to discharge. But in the actual case, he has no claim upon us but as a deist mischievous in his generation.

A brief statement of some otherwise unimportant facts, may, however, be very available for our main purpose. Toland appears in two characters distinct in themselves. We think it a part of our task to identify them. There is a truth of much general application, which should be here observed. On every side, in all great questions in which principle is involved, both parties will find zealous support from persons of extreme, and, therefore, pernicious and false views. Thus, as we shall find order and religion often maintained by prejudice and official corruption, so will the intriguer for license appear among the advocates for liberty. There is, therefore, no deduction to be made from the unfavourable portrait we would here draw for Toland, that his political principles place him among the constitutional ranks of the whigs of 1690. The ability of his pamphlets gave him a momentary importance. His “*Anglia Libera*” was published in 1701, upon the passing of the act of settlement; and when the earl of Macclesfield was sent to Hanover with a copy of the act to the electoral family, whose succession was thus secured, Toland accompanied him, and the earl presented his



book to the princess Sophia. He was, consequently, received with all the favour due to a zealous and useful supporter of the succession: he remained for some weeks at court, and, on his return, was dismissed with presents and honours, among which were portraits of the members of the electoral family. He visited Berlin, with such favourable recommendations, as gave him there, also, access to the court. Such advantages, with the useful talents which he unquestionably possessed, placed him on a footing from which a man of high masculine virtues would have scarcely failed to rise to eminence, and such honours and promotions as are the main objects of public life. But the person who can be used in services of doubtful respectability is, for obvious reasons, not likely to be raised to a higher sphere of action: there are those whose perceptions of the difference between the lofty and the mean are so obtuse, that their ambition will seldom fail to rush upon courses of low subserviency as the paths of advancement, and become the useful and despised servants of firmer and prouder spirits. Such a man we see all reason to pronounce Toland. His pen was employed by Mr Harley, and he obtained the character of being employed by him as a spy. The imputation sits at least consistently upon his character, as known by all the earlier known incidents of his life. Indeed, upon Toland the character reflects no discredit, and it is only important for the lesson which we have endeavoured to point out;—he had the talents and opportunities which gave a different kind of importance to the characters of Swift, Steele, and Addison. If, however, it were worth while to reason out the allegation, it is to be observed, that there is strong confirmation, in a variety of ascertained particulars, which mark the habits and relations acquired in a course of active political intrigue. Without having attained reputation or honourable promotion, Toland was evidently in the use and possession of the underhand avenues and approaches, which enabled him to assume the pretence of an influence which he did not possess, and to act as a place-broker for others. This is not, however, intended to be charged wholly to fraudulent intent. His inordinate vanity led him to exaggerate his importance,—he was useful, and thought himself important. Deficient in the fine and lofty instincts of more elevated minds, Toland could walk with unconscious vanity in degrading ways, and glory in positions where others would be ashamed.

In the course which may be thus generally described he spent several years,—most successful as a pamphleteer, employed by statesmen, and rewarded by profuse gifts and remunerations,—passing also through a great variety of vicissitudes and adventures, of which there is no record but the evidence of vaguely described results. In 1718, he seems at last to have subsided into the philosopher again—the spirit of his youth returned, and he began to publish a continuation of the series of writings for the sake of which we notice him here. In 1725, his “*Pantheisticon*” appeared, in which it plainly appears, that the opponent of those mysteries which are made known by revelation, may have no objection to mysteries of his own invention. The following is a specimen:—“*In mundo omnia sunt unum; unumque est omne in omnibus; quod omne in omnibus Deus est; æternus ac immensus, neque genitus neque interiturus. In eo vivimus, movemur, et existimus. Ab eo na-*

*tum est unumquidque, in eumque denuo reverturum.*" Such is the statement of what may be regarded as the fundamental tenet of the sect of Pantheists—the blasphemous and atheistic society to which Toland belonged. Its entire want of distinct meaning, is such as to suggest the anxious question,—why it is that those who reject the plain and forcible evidences of the christian religion, can be imposed upon by such senseless absurdity. The answer is complicated with numerous considerations; among which is the important fact, that deism is not founded either on the use, or even the abuse of reason, although, in common with all the errors and crimes of men, it is thought important to plead so imposing a sanction; and hence appears the very common phenomenon of persons disclaiming what they would call the impositions of priests and sects, on the alleged ground of the same want of sense and reasonable ground, which is truly and glaringly perceptible in those creeds and philosophies which they set up for themselves. But the secret is made far more apparent from the direct comparison of that which they follow and that which they reject. The religion which would "mortify the deeds of the body," may, in the present instance, be weighed against the pantheism described by Toland. Pantheism, on the authority of a pantheist, was the elevation of every vice into a virtue, by the only means in which human reason could be forced into a sanction—the adoption of unintelligible tenets to perplex the understanding—and, under pretence of reason, set common sense aside. The pantheists were a bacchanalian society, which met to participate in the most frantic follies and indulgences, and encourage each other into a defiance of all restraints of conscience. At those meetings, it was customary to have authorities for atheism brought forward, and passages read out of such ancient writers as might seem to favour the same object. Thus, indeed,—and it is but one of a class, of similar cases,—the very religious feelings implanted in the human breast are converted into a barrier against religion itself.

Toland's book was published at the call of hunger. He had dropped into poverty and neglect; he had been used and abused; and, like all such tools, thrown aside. He was compelled to write a book, not for sale, but to levy a contribution on charity. The subject readiest to his understanding, and nearest to his heart, was the raving impiety of pantheism. The book was privately circulated among such persons as could be prevailed upon to make it the excuse for their benevolence. Among its purchasers, it may be presumed that the greater number were ignorant of the real nature of the book.

Toland was living in London in the winter of 1722, when he fell so ill as to be compelled to have recourse to medical advice. The treatment he received was not successful, and he left his physician and retired to Putney, where he had long been accustomed to pass his summers. Here, for a time, he recovered his strength so far as to be enabled to write "A Dissertation upon the uncertainty of Physic, and the danger of trusting our lives to those who practise it." He soon, however, found that it was not impossible to die without a doctor's help; and, after a short and tedious illness, expired in March, 1722.

We approach, with some reluctance, the discharge of our critical duty in the estimate of the literary character of Toland. The space

which he occupies in the history of literature belongs less to any claim of splendid ability or extensive acquirement, than to that false reputation which may be easily acquired by the meanest talents, when employed in the service of a reigning folly or a popular delusion; and most, perhaps, of all, in the support of any of those forms of unbelief which have their origin in the perversions of human nature. Any empiric—and such are the infidel writers from first to last—who will undertake to release men from the terrors and restraints of the law of God, as declared by himself, and substitute in its place some specious invention, of a kind more accommodating to sin, is sure of all the support that the worst dispositions of mankind can venture to give. To acquire eminence in the senate, at the bar, in the chair of science, is no easy matter,—but it is easy to rise to the vicious eminence of an apologist for vice or folly; and what but such a facility can account for Deism, and the fame of its most eminent professors? If, on any other subject of study which lies within the compass of their power, such reasoners as Herbert, Shaftesbury, and Spinoza, with their long train of jarring sectaries in folly, had appeared,—not even the splendour of eloquence, the original nerve and vein of thought, or the utmost dexterity of perversion, could for an hour impose on the meanest understanding capable of the perusal of such writings. If they had so reasoned on municipal law, on political economy, on mathematics, or on astronomy,—replete as the history of human knowledge is with error,—it would at once be seen that they were gratuitous in their data, evasive and sophistical in their reasonings, and all irreconcilably at variance among themselves. On no other subject but revealed religion will the most coarse and palpable contradictions pass; or the most current and practical observation and experience which govern in all other things, be flippantly denied. Hundreds of persons may be met indeed in the public-room of a stagecoach hotel who pretend to have no acquaintance with history, or law, or science, or any branch of human knowledge beyond some low calling; and yet, if the subject of christianity should by accident be introduced, will shake their heads, smile sardonically, and rise to the dignity of philosophers. To these the mission of a man, like Toland, will always be an *avatar* of living inspiration. And though, happily, there is a predominance of respect for known truth, and a reverence for the rock-built structure of our faith which will combine against such men all that is respectable in society; yet he will not want a congregation. It is also a truth, applicable in this place, that artifice holds as large a place in the proceedings of the deist, as sophistry—to be heard by christians, he will profess to be a christian—when Satan preaches it will be in a garb of light, and perhaps not without interpretations of holy writ. Toland, like Herbert and Shaftesbury, set out with the profession of christianity—like these eminent men to whom, indeed, the comparison is no compliment, he professed friendship, in order to betray. It is curious to observe how the character of Judas has been transmitted.

First assuming the character of a christian writer, and falling in with the notions of a sect favourable to his purpose, he wrote a book full of craft, and in the highest degree calculated to deceive. At that time it was too usual in the pulpit to hear christianity divested of its



doctrines, and reduced to the ethical system which should have its true source in those doctrines—this also favoured the craft of Toland. There were then—as there are still—vast numbers of professing christians who, without denying the authority of Divine revelation, thought very little about it; and who, adopting the ethical system of their preachers, were *virtually* no more than deists with a christian morality. All this afforded great facility for Toland's attack—it was substantially no more than an assault upon quarters which there was no very general zeal to defend. To the professing christian, ignorant of the elementary foundations of his creed, and mainly anxious to take the ground which was most conformable to his inclinations—it would not be unwelcome to have an assurance which lowered the standard of faith, and stripped christianity of all but that which it has in common with worldly wisdom and virtue. Toland met these dispositions in a work in which he attempted to prove that christianity has no mysteries, as it could not be believed that God would impose upon his creatures a faith in things which they could not by nature understand. Such a sophism can hardly be conceived to deceive its author, and is but a proof of dishonesty of purpose. If God had required that man should *understand* that which he had made him incapable of understanding, the argument would have some force. Or if it could be proved from experience, that no fact could be believed until it was first clearly explicable by the understanding, still there would follow some conclusion. But Toland's proof amounts to the lowest equivocation between *belief* and *understanding*. Man believes much, and understands little. And there are few things indeed, and those only human inventions for which he has the evidence which Toland would require for the truths of Scripture. That there should be things existing beyond the narrow limits of human sense is in no way improbable—that these things may be unintelligible to one who understands so little, is as obvious to reason—that a being who is to exist in another state may be in some way concerned in such things, is not liable to any rational objection—that God, the ruler of both states, should reveal them, seems a consequence—that the authority of God should be the surest proof, cannot be denied—and the argument of Toland is, of course, absurd. The question which meets him, and every deist who has straitness of intellect enough to see it, is, as to the immediate authentication of Divine authority. Accordingly, in a subsequent work, he made a very similar attack upon the canon of the Scriptures, under the pretence of discussing a wholly different question. We may, however, dismiss the subject. Christianity has two classes of assailants, of which one must never pass without especial notice; the other may be left to those who are professionally engaged in the maintenance of sacred truth: sophisms which have their foundation in the common infirmity of human reason, and which, without study or prompting, are for ever renewed, ought to be resisted in every quarter. But attacks on the canon of Scripture demand a degree of study which, when any honest understanding applies to the subject, such attacks must be soon relinquished. The best works on testimony, as being the most irrefragable in their reasonings, are those on the canon of Scripture.

## Sir William Brounker, Viscount Castlehyons.

BORN A.D. 1620.—DIED A.D. 1684.

THIS eminent mathematician should have appeared at a somewhat earlier period of our labours. The particulars of his life, on record, are few. He was born in 1620—of his education we can only ascertain that it was irregular, but that, following the bent of his genius, he applied himself with zeal to mathematical science, and early obtained a high reputation among the most eminent philosophers of his day. On the incorporation of the Royal Society, he was elected *pro tempore*, the first president, and continued, by successive election, to fill this exalted station for fifteen years. During this period he contributed some important papers to the Transactions. To him is due the honour of the first idea of continued fractions. He also first solved some ingenious problems in the Indeterminate Analysis. Among his papers, in the "Transactions," the most remarkable are "Experiments concerning the recoiling of Guns; and a series for the quadrature of the Hyperbola."

He was appointed chancellor to the queen, and keeper of her seal—was one of the commissioners for executing the duties of lord high admiral. In 1681, he obtained the mastership of St Katherine's Hospital, near the Tower. He died at his house, in St James' Street, April 5, 1684, and was buried in a vault which he had built for himself in the choir of the hospital.

## George Farquhar.

BORN, A.D. 1678.—DIED, A.D. 1707.

FARQUHAR was the son of a clergyman, and was born in Londonderry in 1678. He is said to have manifested early proofs of dramatic genius. He entered in the university of Dublin, in 1694; and, for some time, showed both industry and talent, but soon fell into a course of dissipation. The result was a total relaxation in his studies, and, if the account which has been given of his expulsion from college be true, he must have, for some time at least, fallen very low into the depraved levities, to which the young are liable when too soon set free from parental control. His class had been given an exercise on a sacred subject, which Farquhar having neglected until he was called upon in the hall, or perhaps in his tutor's apartment; he then proposed to acquit himself by an extemporaneous exercise. The proposal was allowed, and he wrote or uttered a jest at the same time so wretched, indecent, and blasphemous, that we cannot here make even an allusion to its monstrous purport. We are, indeed, inclined to disbelieve a story of such silliness and depravity; but, if it really occurred, it would serve to exemplify a mind so far gone from every sense of respect and decency, as for a time at least to have forgotten their existence in

others; for it is said that Farquhar was disappointed at the failure of a witticism which could only have been tolerated in the last stages of drunkenness, to elicit the approbation of sober and religious men.

The narrative of this strange account relates that, in consequence he was expelled, *tanquam pestilentia hujus societatis*, from the university. The walks of professional life, which are the general aim of academic study, were thus closed against him, and he took refuge upon the stage for which he had in the meantime contracted a strong taste. He had formed an intimacy with Wilks, a well-known English actor, at the time engaged in Dublin, and by his interposition obtained an engagement. His *debut* was favourable, and he continued for a short time on the stage, until he had the ill fortune to wound a brother actor very severely in playing a part in Dryden's play of the Indian emperor. The accident was occasioned by his having inadvertently neglected to change his sword for a foil, in a scene in which he was to kill his antagonist. He was so much shocked that he resolved at once to abandon the stage as an actor.

His friend Wilks was at the time engaged by Rich to play in London. Farquhar accompanied him—and there is reason to presume, that he must have previously made up his mind to try his fortune and genius as a dramatic writer. He had also the good fortune to become acquainted with the earl of Orrery, who gave him a lieutenancy in his regiment.

In 1698, he brought out his comedy of "Love in a Bottle," which was acted with applause. In 1700, he produced his "Trip to the Jubilee," and obtained well-merited popularity by the character of Sir Harry Wildair. This celebrated comedy had a run of fifty-three nights, and gained a reputation for Wilks in the principal character not inferior to that of the author. The same year Farquhar paid a visit to Holland, where he obtained the notice due to his celebrity. Among the incidents of this visit, he mentions an entertainment given by the earl of Westmoreland, at which king William was a guest.

By the influence of Farquhar, that well-known actress, Mrs Oldfield, was first introduced to the London boards in her sixteenth year. Her success was promoted by a drama brought out in 1701 by her protector, in which she obtained very distinguished applause. This was the year of Dryden's death—and Farquhar gives a description of his funeral in one of his letters. The following year he published his letters, essays, and poems, which are replete with all the peculiar qualities of his mind. Among these letters there is one in which he gives to his mistress, Mrs Oldfield, a very characteristic description of himself. "My outside is neither better nor worse than Creator made it; and the piece being drawn by so great an artist, 'twere presumption to say there were many strokes amiss. I have a body qualified to answer all the ends of its creation, and that's sufficient. As to the mind, which, in most men, wears as many changes as their body, so in me 'tis generally dressed in *black*. In short, my constitution is very splenetic, and my amours, both which I endeavour to hide lest the former should offend others, and the latter incommode myself; and my mind is so vigilant in restraining these two failings, that I am taken for an easy-natured man by my own sex, and an ill-natured clown by



yours. I have little estate but what lies under the circumference of my hat; and should I by misfortune lose my head, I should not be worth a groat. But I ought to thank Providence that I can, by three hours' study, live one and twenty, with satisfaction to myself, and contribute to the maintenance of more families than some who have thousands a year."

In 1702, "the Inconstant" appeared with less than his usual success: this is accounted for by the circumstance of a change in the public taste in favour of the Italian opera. The same year he became the dupe of a female adventurer, who took a violent fancy to him, and determined to obtain him for a husband by an unprincipled stratagem, which, perhaps, loses much of its disgusting character when viewed in reference to the lax morals of the period, and the depraved lessons of the stage, in which Farquhar had his ample share. Knowing that he was not to be won without money, the female of whom we speak caused reports of her ample fortune to be circulated in every quarter which best suited her design. And, in the same way, it was conveyed to the vain poet's ear, that she had become desperately in love with him. Farquhar, who was utterly devoid of discretion, at once fell into the snare: the double bait was more than vanity and poverty could withstand. He married his fair ensnarer, and was, of course, undeceived not very satisfactorily—such a practical exemplification of his art he must have considered as bordering too nearly upon the tragic. But it was among the lessons of his pen, and in the habitual contemplation of his mind more nearly allied to the wit of the comic author, than to the baseness of the actual reality. Farquhar too, was not one to brood over an injury, or to reflect very seriously on anything: if he was shocked, it was only for a moment, and he easily forgave the trick; and is said to have always after conducted himself with affection and kindness to his wife.

In 1704, he produced the "Stage Coach," a farce, with the assistance of a friend. In the following year "The Twin Rivals" appeared; and in 1706, "The Recruiting Officer," of which he is mentioned to have collected the materials on a recruiting party in which he was employed for his regiment, in Shrewsbury. Captain Plume, in this farce, is supposed to represent the author himself, and serjeant Kite his serjeant.

The "Beaux Stratagem" completes the list of his works. It still holds a high place in the list of what is called genteel comedy; we know not whether it yet retains any place on the stage, but it was a favourite in the early part of the present century. He died before its appearance—a prey to grief and disappointment, owing to great distress of circumstances, and, it is said, the perfidy of his patron. This nobleman, when applied to in the hour of need, persuaded him to relieve himself by the sale of his commission, and promised to obtain another for him very soon. The advice was followed, but the promise was forgotten; and Farquhar was so heavily affected by the painful feelings occasioned by such a complicated affliction he never again held up his head, but died in April, 1707, in his twenty-ninth year. He left two daughters in a state of entire destitution; but they were befriended by Wilks, his first and last earthly friend, to whom a very pathetic

appeal was found among his papers after his death: it was the following brief note:—

“DEAR BOB,

“I have not anything to leave thee to perpetuate my memory but two helpless girls; look upon them sometimes, and think of him that was to the last moment of his life thine,

“GEORGE FARQUHAR.”

Wilks obtained a benefit for the girls—it was very successful, and the produce was employed for their support.

Many years have past since we have looked into the comedies of Farquhar; we can now form but an indistinct opinion of their general character and merits from any recollection of our own. They belong perhaps to a department of the drama, which, of all branches of English literature, is the least likely to be restored to the possession of that popular favour which is the legitimate claim of those dramas which pretend to the representation of life and manners. Farquhar has been compared with Congreve. If the preference were to be settled with regard to pre-eminence of genius, or even superiority in that wit, in which both excelled, we should not hesitate to decide for Congreve—if, indeed, we should admit the propriety of so unequal a comparison. But Farquhar has his advantages which, although less brilliant and imposing when viewed with regard to genius only, give him many practical claims to an effective superiority. Compared with his greater rival, he is far more natural, and far less licentious and impure: and while the sparkling dialogues of Congreve could never have taken place except upon the stage, Farquhar's scenes were at least true to human life, the manners of his day, and the passions of nature. His plots were also more finished, and the style of his dialogue more simple and unaffected.

Either of these distinguished comic writers, if they should at a future time be looked into, will be chiefly valuable for the reflexion which they retain of the taste and morals of the age in which they wrote; for, of both, it may be said, that they are licentious and artificial. There yet remained the consequences of that corruption of which we think the origin must be looked for in the disorders of the long rebellion, but which was nurtured and brought to its rank maturity in the hotbed of king Charles' court. A strong reaction set in during the reign of William and Mary; but the taint was too congenial for human nature to throw off with ease. Purer rules may be adopted by the reason and conscience, long before taste and fashion, which dwell in pleasures and levities, will be restored. The misapplications of talent are directed by the beck and eye of folly—to say no worse—and the taste of succeeding generations will long continue vitiated by the perpetuating influence of the poet.

It was in this generation, and in the person of Congreve, that the licentiousness of the comic drama received a check from which we are inclined to date much of the reform in manners, which can be subsequently traced. We refer to Collier's “Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage,” published in 1688.

He was weakly opposed by Congreve, whose opposition had only the effect of prolonging, and giving added decision to the victory of his antagonist. "Collier lived," writes Dr Johnson, "to see the reward of his labour in the reformation of the theatre."

Of Congreve, we are entitled to offer a separate notice, as he was educated first at Kilkenny, and then in the university of Dublin. The place of his birth has been disputed, but he was himself strenuous in the assertion of his claim to have been a native of England. We do not see any reason to dispute the point, and our fast contracting limits offer some for declining the doubtful honour. So far as education may be allowed to govern the judgment, store the memory, or guide the taste, his literary reputation is due to the university of Dublin. A brief but sufficient memoir of his life has been written by Johnson, whose writings are in every hand.

## Nahum Tate.

BORN A.D. 1652.—DIED A.D. 1715.

NAHUM TATE was the son of a clergyman of the county of Cavan. He was born in Dublin, whither his father had been driven by the rebels. His father became, after some vicissitudes, minister of Werburgh's church in Dublin. It may be inferred that the son had the advantages of a peaceable youth and pious education. At the age of sixteen he entered the university of Dublin. He was favoured early with the patronage of the earl of Dorset, and succeeded Shadwell as poet laureat. The incidents of his life were few and uninteresting. He fell into great distress and died, it is said in the Mint, into which he had escaped from his creditors.

As a writer, he cannot receive much commendation—his poems and dramatic works could hardly be considered as entitling him to a notice here. But those far and universally known versions of the psalms, which have given to piety a welcome and available resource, and added to sacred music the utterance of inspired feeling, is not to be rated by the talent that has been employed in the pious and honourable task. When the proudest monuments of human genius shall have past away, and when the thoughts of which the very foundation and meaning subsist in perishable things shall have been forgotten, the meanest song, in which eternal truths are uttered, may be preserved by their abiding truth, and be a portion of the records of heaven.

The songs of Zion do not indeed demand the genius of Moore or Byron, to give to heavenly inspiration the power of earthly genius. They demand no refined and artful melody of versification, no terse and pointed rhetoric of style, to wrest them from their pure and simple significancy: they refuse the additions which are involved in the whole art of poetry, and have only required, with the utmost truth and fidelity to be conformed to the rhythm adapted to church music, and to the genius of the national ear. To be sung, as in their origin they were, and to be still the song of every rank and tongue, as well adapted to the sabbath-evening of the peasant, as the endowed cathedral; to be



the effusion of the simplest christian piety, and still not lose their tone and echo of the ancient harp of Israel, only demanded changes of form, to which aspiring genius, with its excess of invention and profuse array of intellectual tints, will not be confined; and which a thorough infusion of genuine sympathy with pious sentiments, can alone command. In such a task a more refined and gifted mind than Tate's might have found itself wanting; and, it may perhaps be not unfitly added—for we have seen it variously exemplified—that a degree of intellectual power little competent in most exertions of human aim, when employed in the service of God, and elevated by that Spirit which is greater than the power of genius, will reach to heights which can be accounted for in no other way than by tracing them to the source of all truth and wisdom,—such efforts will ever be found characterized by a chaste adaptation to their good and hallowed purpose.

### Sir Richard Steele.

BORN A.D. 1671.—DIED A.D. 1729.

STEELE was born in Dublin, some time in 1671. His father was a barrister, and private secretary to the duke of Ormonde, by whose influence his son was admitted into the charter-house in London, to be educated. In this institution he formed his acquaintance with Addison. From the charter-house he entered Merton College, Oxford, where he gave his attention chiefly to the study of English literature, and manifested that talent and restlessness of temper, so remarkable in his after life. While yet in college he wrote a comedy, which he suppressed by the advice of a fellow-student. He probably devoted more time to gaiety and dissipation than to study, and evidently became at last impatient of the sober character of a student. Being destitute of the means of the more expensive and costly dissipation of the place, and, in all probability, infected with the military tastes for gay uniform and companions, to which young men are so liable; he left the university without taking his degree, and enlisted in the horse-guards. The step was fatal to his prospects, as he was thus, by the resentment of his family, cut off from the succession to an estate in the county of Wexford, to which he was the presumptive heir.

Having thus cut the ties between him and these expectations to which he was entitled by his birth, Steele was not deficient in those less ordinary advantages, by which men of genius and enterprise occasionally make their way good in life. As often happens in such instances, he had more power to win, than prudence to secure, the advantages of success. His wit, uniform gaiety, and amiability of manner and temper, together with the pleasure-loving recklessness of his character, made him a universal favourite in the regiment. With these qualities Steele possessed another, not so much in unison with such a temper, and not so much to the taste of those by whom it is possessed—a tender and impressible conscience. Young men, abandoned to gaiety with that wholeness of devotion which generally marks

the follies of the young, will not often—if ever—be observed to be very much alive to impressions of an opposite kind; but this is chiefly because, in the crowd, the physical portion of our nature is far predominant above the moral or intellectual, and preserves therefore, more thoroughly that consistency in good or evil which is due to habits of mind, however caused. But it is different in the few cases where the mind obtains some degree of prevalence: the seeming contradiction, so frequently displayed in the career of Steele, then appears. While the animal passions, and the tastes which they engender, will hurry on the devotee of folly, he becomes, at the same time, painfully subject to the daily check of a voice which he cannot silence, because he continues, in despite of folly, to think and feel; he cannot be brutalized by the cup of Circe till after long and repeated draughts have at length destroyed the divine elements of humanity within him. In Steele, restless and impulsive as he was, the noble element was strong within; and, while his wit and spirit placed him high in the revel, he felt also a growing repugnance to the distinction, and turned in his moments of reflection to look back, with longing, upon the peaceful and happy tenor of better and more profitable years. But, above all, he was yet, in his convictions at least, a sincere Christian, and could not without compunction experience the total inconsistency with such a profession of all his present companionships and avocations. He resolved at last on a change, for which he by no means possessed adequate perseverance; yet, acting with a noble courage on his resolution, he at once took what he considered a decisive step to cut the bonds between him and temptation. In pursuance of this laudable design he wrote for himself a brief manual of moral and religious counsel, which he shortly after published under the title of “The Christian Hero.” The result strongly proves the real character of his associates—he was at once denounced among them and universally shunned. Those who had been his companions and admirers took every opportunity to insult him, and, as they said, to prove whether he was a “Christian Hero” or not. Among them, one more violent and vain-glorious than the rest endeavoured to provoke him to a duel. Steele made every effort to avoid it, but the prejudice of the day was still in favour of this monstrous remnant of the barbarism of Gothic times; and public opinion was imperative. A soldier could not, without the loss of honour, refuse to expose his life at the demand of the most wanton vice and folly. Steele was compelled to meet his brutal and despicable challenger, but had the good fortune or the prowess to run him through in the encounter. The whole transaction came circumstantially before the commander of the regiment; lord Cutts, whose conduct deserves to be honourably recorded, appointed him his private secretary, and obtained him an ensign in the regiment of lord Lucas.

The impression made in the regiment, generally, and among the dissolute circle in which he lived, was, however, strongly unfavourable to Steele,—and not, indeed, without strong apparent ground. It was evident that a course of reckless dissipation was maintained during the composition of a book, which, thus accompanied, could not fail to carry an air of gross insincerity; his mornings were spent in preaching against the disorder and vices of his nights, and the

charge of hypocrisy can only be answered by the imputation of a more than common share of that fearful inconsistency which is a known condition of the human character. The contempt thus incurred, if not justly directed, was at least strongly sanctioned. Steele is thought to have sought refuge in literary distinction, and, under the influence of this distressing position, to have turned his mind to the drama—then the main direction of the intellectual power of the age. His first effort, in this line of composition, was the “Funeral, or Grief a la mode,” a Comedy. It had at least the success of satisfying the king’s taste, and the author’s name was placed on the list of preferment—the king, however, did not live to effect his favourable intentions, and the list of court favour was cancelled by death. His friendship with Addison was of more avail. Addison exerted himself so strenuously that he obtained for him the appointment of writer of the *Gazette*, with a salary of £300 a-year.

Encouraged by the success of his first effort he persevered in dramatic composition; and in the course of the next few years brought out several plays, some original, some translations.

Steele is best known to posterity as a writer of periodical papers, which have survived, not alone by their own great merit, but by their conjunction with the writings of Addison, his still more illustrious friend. Steele appears to have been the projector of the first effort of this character, which, in any considerable degree, caught the public attention. He commenced the *Tattler* on the 22d April, 1709. Addison, who was not in the secret, discovered the true author by means of a comment on Virgil, which he had given to Steele. Addison’s first contribution appeared on the 26th of May following, and he continued to assist his friend by a succession of papers, which continued at intervals nearly till the 2d of January, 1711, when Steele discontinued the *Tattler*. This paper may not improbably have been suggested by Swift’s papers on Bickerstaff, which preceded it but a little, and it is known that Swift was for sometime an active contributor; it was not, however, till Addison became enabled by the change of the ministry to give his time to the paper, that it rose to any very considerable eminence. It advanced the reputation of Steele very much, and obtained for him the office of commissioner of stamps.

In the mean time, Steele had contracted a marriage, in which it is most likely that his principal objects were not attained,—a lady, who brought him an estate in the island of Barbadoes, considered worth eight hundred pounds a-year, but encumbered to nearly its value. Such an alliance held forth a strong temptation to one of Steele’s expensive habits, and brought with it not much more than an excuse for extravagance.

On the 1st of March, 1711, the first number of the *Spectator* was published. It was conceived and generally executed in a more serious spirit, and has been, we believe, by far the most successful production of the same class. Though perhaps mainly designed as a vehicle for political opinion, it soon obtained a far higher, as well as more useful direction “to mend the manners and improve the heart;” an intent loudly called for by the time. Johnson, whose wide acquaintance with the history of literature gives authority to his remarks, in his



notice of this kind of writing in which he was himself only second to Addison, tells us,—“To teach the minuter decencies and inferior duties—to regulate the practice of daily conversation—to correct those depravities which are rather ridiculous than criminal—and to remove those grievances, which, if they produce no lasting calamities, impress hourly vexation—was first attempted by Casa in his *Book of Manners*, and Castiglione in his *Courtier*—two books yet celebrated in Italy for purity and elegance; and which, if they are now less read, are neglected only because they have effected that reformation which their authors intended.” We have made this extract, not only for its historical value, but because it gives a just, though perhaps too expanded a description of this species of literature, which was a great and especial want of the time in which the *Spectator* appeared. This desideratum could not fail to force itself on the keen observation of Steele and his cotemporaries—Swift and Addison—who seem to have eminently possessed the talents which their day stood in need of. There was a laxity of manners; the result of a looseness of morals—of the prevalence of deism—and, in some measure, of the simplicity and ignorance of the times. “Before the *Tattler* and *Spectator*,” says Johnson, “if the writers for the theatre are excepted, England had no masters of common life.” The office here described, was, as we have already mentioned, ingrafted on the primary design, for the purpose of obtaining general attention by the production of papers in which persons of every party might find an equal interest. And as party animosity ran high during their publication, there may have been felt a very considerable attraction in papers full of wit, refinement, and interesting observation, which alone breathed no fierce passion or uncandid misrepresentation—the universal spirit of politics, then as now and ever. In these papers, which appeared daily, and were perhaps a fashionable accompaniment to the breakfast table, every one found something to learn from or be amused by—absurdities were exposed with a rare combination of good nature and playful wit—the taste of the age was instructed by criticism, such as no age or country has excelled for elegance, truth, and just refinement; while, from time to time, papers appeared in support of religious truths, which yet hold their place among the most consummate specimens of English style. These remarks would, according to our general plan, be more fitly placed at the end of this memoir; but, in point of fact, they have more reference to the papers of Addison than to those of Steele, whose share in the *Spectator* was not less in point of quantity, but in other respects stamped with the comparative inferiority of his genius to that of his friend. Johnson makes a computation, from which the daily sale of the *Spectator* appears to have amounted to no more than 1680 copies.

Among the notices connected with this period of Steele’s life several stories are told, which display the singular improvidence and carelessness of his temper in a strong point of view. He was in the habit of constantly postponing the composition of his paper until the last moment, while the printer waited to carry it to the press. Mr Nutt, the printer of the *Tattler*, has been known to mention, that he had at one time occasion to call on Steele at midnight for the paper for next

morning, which he, having entirely neglected, then sat up in bed, and wrote in Mr Nutt's presence.

The fulness with which we have already, in our life of Swift, entered upon the political history of this generation, together with the consideration that we have far exceeded the space allotted to the period, must compel us to observe the greatest possible brevity in our notice of Steele's political career. Political controversy was then a principal path to literary eminence, and a ready open to preferment. The strife of parties, now carried on within the walls of parliament, or in the columns of the daily press, was then carried on by pamphlets, and in this war Steele was among the most distinguished. He was a staunch adherent to the whigs. His countryman, Swift, was his most formidable antagonist in the opposite party.

Immediately previous to the last parliament in the end of the reign of queen Anne, when the point of main interest was the underhand struggle, then in its fiercest height, between the adherents of the Stuarts and the settlement of the crown upon the electress of Hanover and her descendants, Steele wrote an elaborate pamphlet in support of the latter interest: it was called "the Crisis," and pointed in strong terms to the dangers and conspiracies against the protestant succession.\* It called forth the resentment of Harley, and the occasion of vengeance was not slow to come. When the election of a new parliament drew nigh, he resigned his place of stamp commissioner, and was elected for the borough of Stockbridge.

The ministry resolved to unseat him, and that the matter might be brought in with the least impediment, the subject of his pamphlet was very distinctly, though in general terms, introduced in the queen's speech. In the mean time Steele did himself no good service: on the nomination of Sir T. Hanmer as speaker, he rose to second the motion, but became confused, and could only utter a few ill-selected words, which excited a sensation of ridicule in the house, and a cry of "*Tattler*" was raised. He sat down in his confusion; and it was remarked among the members, "It is not so easy a thing to speak in the house—he fancies because he can scribble, that he can speak."

As it was the object of the ministers to unseat him with the least possible delay, and as a petition, which was brought against his return, must have been very slow, it was thought a preferable course to propose the immediate consideration of that part of the speech which adverted to seditious libels. Mr Hungerford, a lawyer, who had been expelled the house for taking a bribe in king William's reign, was employed to call the attention of the house to Steele's pamphlet, and was followed by Mr Harley (the lord-treasurer's brother), and others. They first proposed proceeding at once to extremities, without allowing of any defence; it was then proposed to allow three days. Steele, however, showed some presence of mind and considerable address and

\* It was answered by Swift; and it is remarkable that he also contrived in his answer, "The Public Spirit of the Whigs," very seriously to involve himself in the displeasure of the Scottish peerage, so that he escaped the consequences, with some difficulty, by the address of Mr Harley, and the fidelity of his printer—the account of this may be found in his memoir, vol. iv.

wit, and, by contriving to put the house in good humour, he obtained a week to prepare for his defence. In the mean time he displayed his spirit and indiscretion, by making an attack on the government.

The 18th of March, the day appointed for his defence, proved that he could speak before the house, and that with extraordinary ability and power, by a speech of three hours' duration. On this occasion he stood at the bar of the house, supported by Walpole and Stanhope on either side; his friend, Addison, sat near to assist and prompt him, and he made a defence alike remarkable for argument and wit. His enemies did not think it necessary to reply in detail, as they relied more on their ascertained majority in the house than upon any consideration of the justice of their charges. Mr Auditor Foley peremptorily alleged that the writings complained of were scandalous, and called for the question. Walpole rose and made one of his ablest speeches in behalf of Steele, and retorted on the Tories with a force so tremendous, as must, for a moment, have made them regret having stirred so perilous a question; among other severe strokes, he said, "From what fatality does it arise, that what is written in favour of the Protestant succession, and what was countenanced by the late ministry, is deemed a libel by the present administration? General invectives in the pulpit against any particular sin have never been deemed a reflection on individuals, unless the darling sin of those persons happen to be the vice against which the preacher inveighs. It becomes, then, a fair inference from the irritability and resentment of the present administration against its defender, that their darling sin is to obstruct and prevent the Protestant succession."

This occasion was attended by another incident of great interest, which we cannot omit. Steele had formerly in one of his periodical papers refuted a scandalous libel against lady Charlotte Finch, daughter to lord Nottingham, and afterwards duchess of Somerset. Her brother, lord Finch, as yet a very young man, was at this time in parliament, and was naturally eager to repay such an important obligation, by standing up for the defender of his sister. He had, however, never yet addressed the house, and when he made the attempt he was, like Steele himself, overpowered by the embarrassment, better known than understood, which is so usual on such occasions; he became confused; and, deserted by his self-possession and clear command of thought, after a vain effort, he sat down. But while he was taking his seat, he said, in a voice loud enough to be heard, "It is strange I cannot speak for this man, though I could readily fight for him." This noble spirited exclamation communicated a momentary thrill of generous feeling to the house, and "hear him, hear him," resounded on every side. Lord Finch rose again, the chain of embarrassment was broken, and he delivered an able and eloquent speech. Lord Mahon observes that this "was the beginning of a public career, which, though not illustrious, was long useful and honourable."\*

The result of the debate was unfavourable to Steele,—the Tories carried the motion by a majority of 245 against 152, that the "*Englishman*" and "the *Crisis*" were scandalous libels; and that Mr Steele

\* Hist. England, I.



be expelled the house. Steele soon after published a defence, which he dedicated to Walpole. Although we can have no doubt as to the substantial truth and justice of the imputations against the government, which are involved in these obnoxious writings of Steele, yet we must add, that, as a literary production, the merit of the *Crisis* seems to have been inconsiderable. Sir Walter Scott, in speaking of it says, "This treatise was brought forward with a degree of pomp and parade which its contents hardly warrant, being chiefly a digest of the acts of parliament respecting the succession, mixed with a few comments, of which the diction is neither eloquent, forcible, nor precise; while, by the extraordinary efforts made to obtain subscriptions, it was plain that the relief of the author's necessities was the principal object of the publication.\*

We have already in our memoir of Swift adverted to the long and violent quarrel which was during this period raging between Swift and Steele. It was then our intention to bring it forward here in considerable detail, but, as matters stand, we are compelled to abandon this intention—the interest would not compensate the space lost. On Swift's part this conflict was carried on with all the fierce animosity and unrelenting rancour of his nature. He assailed the writings, the feelings, and the private life and reputation of Steele, with all the keen and searching malice of his unsparing satire. "It is to Steele's honour," says Scott, "that although he appears to have rushed hastily, and without due provocation, into the quarrel with Swift, he did not condescend to retort these personalities." Some letters which passed between Swift and Steele form the most interesting part of the quarrel—they will be found in the published collection of Swift's correspondence.

Among Steele's political writings on the main question, which, at the same date, occupied the public, was a pamphlet, entitled "The Romish Ecclesiastical History of Late Years"—of which the object is sufficiently expressed in the title.

The accession of George I. opened better prospects to Steele. He was appointed surveyor of the royal stables at Hampton Court, and was also knighted. He again entered parliament as member for Boroughbridge. His circumstances were considerably relieved by a share in the patent for Drury-lane theatre, from which he derived, it is said, considerable emolument until 1720. In 1717, he was appointed one of the commissioners of inquiry upon the estates forfeited in Scotland by the rebellion of 1715—the consequence was a visit to Scotland, where he was received with great courtesy and respect.

In 1719, an unhappy difference arose between him and Addison, owing to a pamphleteering controversy on the subject of a bill for the limitation of the peerage. The difference was soon made up, but there grew up between these eminent friends a degree of estrangement, which rather increased than diminished for the remainder of their lives; yet, without any formal breach, and perhaps also without very sensibly lessening the old friendship which had subsisted from their very schoolboy days. We think it worth observing, that strong

\* Life of Swift, Ed. 1834, p. 161.

friendships contracted very early in life, while numerous points of the character yet remain undeveloped, must always be liable to the risk of such estrangements. The high and constant spirit, will, it is true, not easily resign a sentiment of honourable affection; but two minds may, through life, by the development of opposite peculiarities, so continue to grow asunder from each other, as to render intercourse constrained and painful, unless by fits of occasion, when differences are, for the moment, suppressed, and only recollections of better days are called up. And so it soon became between Addison and Steele—they gradually ceased to seek each other. But when they did chance to meet, they threw aside all jarring topics, and indulged in the fullest flow of mutual kindness and affection. Both, indeed, were men free from the darker shades of human gall. Steele had not that depth and tenacity which retain offence; and that levity of temper, which in him was the source of many faults, is the least consistent with any lasting sense of anger: Addison was in these respects widely different; but in him there was a nobility of spirit, which makes just allowance, and a christian temper of humility and charity, which is ready to bear and forbear. To one of Addison's fine taste and cautious temper, Steele's perpetual thoughtlessness must have been the cause of constant disquiet; while, at the same time, it exercised all his kindness of nature in the endeavour to guard his friend against the consequences of his invincible indiscretion and extravagance. Of this many incredible anecdotes remain, which we do not think it necessary to collect. Some may be useful for the illustration of character they contain. Steele's habit of extravagant expense was his besetting infirmity; on the slightest acquisition of means, he rushed into such expenses as ten times the emolument could not support; indeed, his economy seems never to have looked beyond the present day. He had built an extravagant villa near London, where he continued to live for a time in the most lavish extravagance. Addison had wasted his utmost efforts to induce him to part with this ruinous establishment, but all in vain. At last Steele became deeply embarrassed, and applied to his friend for the loan of a thousand pounds. Addison, of course, saw at once that the repayment of such a sum would be impossible; but, on reflection, he also saw that the loan might enable him to force his friend from the destructive position in which he was pertinaciously fixed. He lent him the required sum for twelve months, on the security of the house and furniture. The money soon went; but, at the end of the year, Steele was as poor as in the beginning—there was no means of repayment, but by the sale of the obnoxious premises. This Addison enforced—and then explained his motives in a friendly letter to Steele, who received the explanation with candour, and there was no interruption to their friendship. It is mentioned that at a subsequent period Steele fitted up part of his house at York building as a theatre for recitations. One day, while visiting the work, he took it into his head to try how a voice would sound from a rostrum which was preparing for the purpose: accordingly, he desired the carpenter to mount and say something: the man got up; but, after scratching his head for a moment, could not think of anything to say. Steele desired that he should say whatever came uppermost: "Why here,"



spoke the carpenter, "we have been working for you these six months, and cannot get one penny of money. Pray, sir, when do you mean to pay us." "Very well, very well," interrupted Sir Richard, "pray come down, I've heard quite enough, I can't but own you speak very distinctly, though I don't much admire your subject."

On the accession of Mr Walpole to power, Steele was reinstated in the theatrical station, from which he had, according to his own account of the matter, been ejected by the private malice of the chamberlain. The influence of this happy circumstance gave new spirit to his dramatic talents, and he soon after produced the most successful of his comedies—the "Conscious Lovers"—which was received with the highest applause of the theatre; and, having published it with a dedication to the king, his majesty presented him with £500.

Steele was one of that not very uncommon order of persons, who cannot be permanently benefited by kindness—money to him was like water to a sieve. Few had, indeed, been more fortunate, if favourable circumstances could counterbalance the total want of prudence. In addition to the successes which attended his literary and political course, his first wife brought him a handsome fortune, which, with a little judicious management in the beginning, might alone have secured a respectable independence. This lady having died soon, he married his second wife, a lady possessed of an estate in Wales. Happily, this lady, or more probably her family, took the most necessary precaution to secure her property in her own hands; and to this alone, perhaps, he was indebted for a retreat in the last days of his life. He was greatly attached to his second wife, who appears to have deserved his love by kindness. Mutual discontents must have frequently interrupted their peace, as Steele's desperate and unreflecting extravagance was to be resisted by her prudence. She has been accused of parsimony; but we can have no hesitation in rejecting the imputation, too obviously the result of circumstances which made it her daily duty to resist the extreme and wilful folly of her spendthrift husband.

Sir Richard Steele would have spent his wife's patrimony with the same rapidity, and by the same ready channels which quickly carried away his own resources. He was not long in disencumbering himself of the royal bounty, of the profits of his play and theatre, and compelled to resign whatever estate he was in any way possessed of for the benefit of his creditors. He retired to Llanquonnor, in Carmarthenshire—the estate of his wife. There the short remainder of his life was spent.

In the solitude of retirement, and in the languor of impaired health, when ordinary men have rarely the courage or the reflection to survey the errors of past life, or to turn in search of the long neglected narrow path, which is the only refuge in the end, Steele's devotional temper, which had always maintained a place, in "spite of folly"—for he never sunk into vice—obtained the entire possession of his breast. He carried, happily, with him into retirement, the recollection, that though he had been led away by his vanity and his impetuous impulses, he had never attempted to justify folly at the expense of truth; but in his writings had strenuously and effectually vindicated the



supremacy of order, sound morality, and true religion. Men of ordinary ingenuity, when they follow an erroneous career, seldom fail to seek for peace and self-content, by some dexterous misrepresentation. Steele was too honest—he was quite incapable of guile, and he now experienced the reward. It pleased God to visit him with mercy in his retreat; and he there entered on a sternly sober course of sacred study and preparation, which excluded all other occupations.

For such an interval, no long pause was needful.—And we have to trace no long period between the world and the grave. He was seized with a paralytic affection, from which he recovered but partially—and soon after, died, on 21st September, 1729, and was privately interred in Carmarthen church.

## Robert Molesworth, Viscount Molesworth.

BORN A.D. 1656.—DIED A.D. 1725.

THE Molesworth family anciently possessed rank and fortune in the counties of Bedford and Northampton; and are traced so far back as the reign of the first Edward, from whom their ancestor, Sir William de Molesworth, received knighthood in 1306, on the occasion when prince Edward was knighted. He had attended the king in his expedition to the Holy Land, and, at several times, received distinguished honours from him and his successor.

From a younger branch of his descendants in a direct line, came Robert, the father of the person here under our notice. In the rebellion of 1641, he came into Ireland as a captain in the regiment commanded by his elder brother. At the termination of the civil wars, he became an undertaker, and obtained 2500 acres of land in the county of Meath. He afterwards became a merchant in Dublin, and rose into great wealth and favour with the government. He died in 1656.

Four days after his father's death, in the same year, Robert Molesworth was born—the only son of his father.

He received his education in Dublin, and entered the university. He married early, probably in his twentieth year, a sister of the earl of Bellamont. In the struggle previous to the Revolution, he came forward early in support of the prince of Orange, for which his estates were seized by king James, under whose parliament he was attainted. He was, however, soon restored to his rights, by king William, who entertained a high esteem for him; and, soon after his accession to the throne, sent him as an envoy into Denmark.

At Denmark he fell into some disfavour with the Danish court. The circumstances are only known through the representations of an adversary; but they are probable, and may be substantially true. He is stated, by Dr King, on the authority of the Danish envoy, to have most unwarrantably trespassed on the royal privileges, by hunting in the royal preserves, and riding on the road exclusively appropriated to the king. In consequence of those freedoms, he was forbidden the court, and left the country without the ordinary form of an audience.

On his arrival in England, he wrote and published "An Account of Denmark." The book was written under the influence of resentment, and gave a very unfavourable account of the Danish government. It was, of course, highly resented by that court, and most especially by prince George, who was married to the English princess Anne, afterwards queen of England. A complaint was made to king William, by Scheele, the Danish envoy in London—he also supplied Dr King with materials for a reply—on the warrant of which we have the above particulars.

Molesworth's book became at once popular, and was the means of greatly extending his reputation, and raising him in the estimation of the most eminent literary characters of the day. He served in the Irish house of commons, for the borough of Swords. He was elected to a seat in the English parliament, for East Retford. He obtained a seat in the privy council, in the reign of queen Anne—but lost it in 1713, in the heat of party, in consequence of a complaint brought against him by the lower house of convocation, for some words of an insulting purport spoken by him in public. It is, however, easy to see that, in the fierce animosity of the tories then striving for existence, a staunch supporter of the house of Hanover had little chance of favour. The "Crisis," mentioned in the previous memoir, was partly written in defence of Molesworth.

At length the accession of George the first once more restored the Whigs to place and favour. Molesworth was again named as one of the Irish privy council, and a commissioner of trade and plantations.

In 1716, the king created him an Irish peer, under the titles of baron Philipstown and viscount Molesworth of Swords, by patent, dated 16th July, 1716. He was a fellow of the Royal Society, and took a prominent part in every concern which affected the welfare of his country, till the last two years of his life, when he withdrew from public affairs, and devoted his time to literary retirement.

He died 22d May, 1725, and was buried at Swords.

Besides his "Account of Denmark," he wrote several pieces of considerable ability, which had, in their day, the effect of exciting public attention, and awakening a useful spirit in Ireland.

In 1723, he published an address to the Irish house of commons for the encouragement of agriculture, and in 1719, a letter relative to the Irish peerage. He translated a political treatise of the civilian Hottoman, from the Latin, and this work reached a second edition, in 1721. His tracts were numerous, and were generally approved for their strong sense and plain force of style.

## Charles Boyle, fourth Earl of Orrery.

BORN A.D. 1676.—DIED A.D. 1731.

THE subject of this memoir, Charles Boyle, second surviving son to the second earl of Orrery, and the lady Mary Sackville, second daughter to the earl of Dorset, was born in 1676. He received his education in English schools; from which he became a student in

Christ Church, Oxford, under the tuition of the celebrated Atterbury and the Rev. Dr Friend. He possessed that industrious energy of temperament which had distinguished many of his race, and applied himself to study with a devotion which injured his health. His industry was repaid by the acquisition of a very high academic reputation, and the more substantial attainment of such knowledge as the studies then pursued in his university were likely to impart. Dr Aldrich, the head of his college, formed a very high opinion of his merits, and dedicated to him his "*Compendium of Logic*," in which he calls him, "*Magnum ædis nostræ ornamentum*." Mr Boyle's literary ambition seems to have been strongly excited while yet a student. He translated the life of Lysander from Plutarch, and published it. This was probably undertaken at the suggestion of Aldrich, who presently after set him upon a task of far more doubtful result—an edition of the "*Epistles of Phalaris*."

Boyle readily entered upon the work, and translated the epistles into Latin, which he published with the Greek text. Toward the end of his Latin preface, he dropped an unlucky sentence, in which he accused the librarian, who was no less a person than Dr Bentley, of unpolitely withholding from him the manuscript. Bentley wrote a letter in explanation, in which he denied the imputation of having withheld the manuscript. The truth appears to be, that the bookseller who had been employed to collate the manuscript in St James' library with that in Oxford, neglected the task, and excused himself by a falsehood. But to this person Bentley had expressed his opinion that the letters were spurious; and this being conveyed to Boyle, he felt offended, and gave way to the natural petulance of his temper. He replied, "that what Mr Bentley said might be true, but that the bookseller had represented the matter quite otherwise;" and ended by a very unwarrantable defiance, telling Bentley that "he might seek redress in what way he pleased."

The matter might have stopped here; but another train of incidents took place at nearly the same time, which led to that subsequent collision, so celebrated in literary history. Sir William Temple, in one of his essays, had cited the epistles of Phalaris and the fables of Æsop, as instances of the superiority of ancient literature. We shall extract the whole of Temple's observation, as it will be the best introduction to the controversy.—"It may, perhaps, be further affirmed, in favour of the ancients, that the oldest books we have are still, in their kind, the best. The two most ancient that I know, in prose, among those we call profane authors, are Æsop's fables and Phalaris' epistles, both living near the same time—which was that of Cyrus and Pythagoras. As the first has been agreed by all ages since, for the greatest master in his kind, and all others of that sort have been but imitations of his original—so I think the epistles of Phalaris to have more race, more spirit, more force of wit and genius, than any others I have ever seen, either ancient or modern. I know several learned men—or that usually pass for such, under the name of critics—have not esteemed them genuine; and Politian, with some others, have attributed them to Lucian; but I think he must have little skill in painting, that cannot find this out to be an original.—Such diversity of passions upon



such variety of actions and passages of life and government, such freedom of thought, such boldness of expression, such bounty to his friends, such scorn to his enemies, such honour of learned men, such esteem of good, such knowledge of life, such contempt of death, with such fierceness of nature, and cruelty of revenge, could never be represented but by him that possessed them; and I esteem Lucian to have been no more capable of writing, than of acting what Phalaris did. In all one writ, you find the scholar or the sophist; and in all the other, the tyrant and the commander!"\* His essay was answered by Wotton's "Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning." While engaged in this essay, Wotton was assured by Bentley that the two examples on which Temple relied were both spurious; on which Bentley was pressed to write his opinions, as an appendix to the projected essay. Bentley assented, but delayed; and the essay came out without his argument. On the publication of the second edition, the importunity of Wotton prevailed; and Bentley, still reluctant to come into collision with the editors of the Oxford edition of the epistles, at last consented, and his dissertation appeared—making good the points of his previous affirmation. Having asserted and explained the habits of forgery—to which the ancients, during many centuries, had been notoriously addicted—he attacked the genuineness of the epistles of Phalaris, on the grounds of their chronology, style, substance, and the date of their first appearance. Having fixed the lowest possible limit for the age of Phalaris, he showed that they contained numerous references to events long subsequent to the death of Phalaris.† He also pointed out that the style was not that of the Dorian prince—being Attic, and not even the Attic style of the age of Phalaris—with other arguments of similar force. With less truth he attacks the letters, as inconsistent with the character of Phalaris; and, lastly, shows the high improbability of their having lain unknown for upwards of a thousand years, until the time of Lucian. He then enters into a vindication of his own conduct from Mr Boyle's aspersion; and concludes by alleging that the version which had recently appeared was full of faults, and hinting that it was not Mr Boyle's own work. Bentley's dissertation was fully sufficient to set the question at rest, and was at once received by all distinguished scholars as a model of skill and learning. Mr Boyle and his literary allies had, however, the felicity attributed by Goldsmith to the village pedant, for, "e'en tho' vanquished he could argue still." A junto of clever heads joined their contributions of wit and erudition to produce a reply, and demolish Bentley. Boyle was aided by Atterbury, Smalridge, the Friends, and others; and the discharge of their combined

\* Temple's Essays, vol. ii. p. 84. Lond. 1821.

† We presume that the generality of our readers are sufficiently conversant with the most common incidents of ancient history, to recollect the history of Phalaris, whose supposed epistles were the occasion of this celebrated controversy. He is mentioned as a Cretan, who was banished for an attempt to usurp the government of his native city; and, having fled to Sicily, he contrived to usurp that of Agrigentum. He was famous for his cruelty and talent; and is familiarly recollected by the story of Perillus and the brazen bull which he invented for the torture of criminals, and presented to Phalaris, who tried its effect upon the contriver.

ability was launched again at the librarian's devoted head, in a dissertation entitled, "Dr Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Æsop, examined, by the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esq." That a composition of the leading wits of Oxford should contain marks of its varied and fertile soil, is but a matter of course; nor is it less so, that it should be hailed with acclamation by the crowd, who may be always found in the train of popular talents and of aristocratic pretensions. This reply was at once received with general applause; and this seemed confirmed by numerous clever productions, which appeared to swell the triumph of the Oxonians.—Among these appeared Swift's "Battle of the Books." There are more who understand ingenuity, wit, and expertness, and feel the force of satire, than there are who can appreciate the merits of an argument, or weigh the value of a statement—so that there was a current of popular opinion against Bentley; and his adversaries indulged in a triumph which must have added to the mortification of their subsequent discomfiture. In the commencement, however, of the following year (1699), there came out the "Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris, with an Answer to the Objections of the Honourable Charles Boyle, by Richard Bentley, D.D."—which silenced the chattering train, and placed Bentley at the height of his immortal reputation, as a writer and scholar of the first order.

Mr Boyle's next production was a comedy, which we have not read; but it is described by Budgel, as "having too much wit." He also wrote some copies of verses, at nearly the same time; one of which is addressed to Garth, on his "Dispensary"—a poem in which a ludicrous compliment is paid to himself:

"So diamonds take a lustre from their foil,  
And to a Bentley 'tis we owe a Boyle,"—

An unlucky suggestion—which justice will retort on the person so untruly flattered. But there then existed a sense of deferential and adulatory reverence towards rank which has since given way before the advance of the equalizing influences of civilization. The aristocracy of England, now, perhaps, exalted in the scale of sterling respectability, have been long shorn of the illusory rays which were derived from the mere servility of a ruder time.

On leaving Oxford, Mr Boyle entered parliament as member for Huntingdon. The rival candidate lodged a petition against his return; and the speech made on the occasion by Mr Boyle, occasioned a duel between him and the petitioner. "They fought," writes Budgel, "in a gravel-pit, near the gate which now leads to Grosvenor Square. Mr Boyle received several wounds himself before he hurt his adversary; but, at last, making a resolute thrust, he wounded Mr W——ly in such a manner, a little above the thigh, as made that gentleman desire the contest might proceed no farther. Mr Boyle granted his request; but had like to have died of the several wounds he received, and languished under them in a tedious fit of sickness for many months after the duel."

In 1703, his brother Lionel having died without issue, he succeeded to the title, and shortly after married the lady Elizabeth Cecil, daughter

to the earl of Exeter. In 1703, he was appointed colonel of a regiment of foot. On queen Anne's restoration of the order of the Thistle, in 1705, he was elected a knight of that order.

In 1709, he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general, and immediately after, in the next year, to that of major-general. In 1710, he was sent as British envoy to Flanders, and to the council of state in the Spanish Low Countries, with an allowance of £10 a-day. In 1712, he served under the duke of Ormond in Flanders, and was present in the battle of Taniers, in which he distinguished himself at the head of his own regiment. He was sworn on her majesty's privy council, and raised to the British peerage soon after his return, by the title of Baron Boyle of Marston.

In the subsequent reign he was successively honoured with various appointments which may be found enumerated by Lodge; but must be here omitted.

On the accession of George I., lord Orrery's reputation, and the caution which he had always preserved in his intercourse with public men, preserved him in favour for a time; and it seems apparent that he might, without difficulty, have made good his footing by pursuing a steady and consistent course. But, though both clever, dexterous, and accomplished, lord Orrery was not either sagacious or profound. He over-rated his talent and importance; and, having manners which attracted flattery, he allowed himself to be flattered into presumption. At a time when dangerous plots were apprehended, and suspicion was ever on the watch to fasten on doubtful conduct, he affected a tone of honest independence for which no sagacious observer was likely to give him credit. But in fact, as shall presently appear, he was closely watched, and thoroughly understood. This is the true interpretation of his friend Budgel's account of his loss of favour by an unwillingness to fall in with the "violent humour of those times." He evidently endeavoured to trim dexterously. Several of those with whom he was in the habit of acting lost their places, but he for a time preserved his own. He voted much with ministers, and wrote a letter to the king to excuse himself for not voting always with them; and offered, if required, to resign all his posts.

The consequences soon began to appear. The king went to Hanover soon after, and while he was there, lord Orrery's regiment was taken from him—on this he resigned his court office of lord of the bed-chamber. After which he remained, for some years, in a state of comparative privacy, to which his aspiring and over-active temper could ill be reconciled. This continued from this time, in 1716, till the year 1722. During the interval, we have met with no very detailed account of his lordship, though he is occasionally to be traced in Ireland, where he filled a gap in the circle which revolved around the central light of Swift. In Ireland this was a distinction; but to one of lord Orrery's habits and intercourse with the great world, it was accompanied by humiliating circumstances. He could not bear to be a satellite; yet it was only on such terms he could enjoy the privilege of taking his station in the court of wit. He is thought by Scott to have resented the self-imposed mortification—and the inconsistency is at least natural. It is the character of vanity to study ap-



pearance at the sacrifice of reality, and purchase flattery with humiliation. He treated the Dean's memory with a severity, which, though in our estimation by no means unjust, yet comes with a bad grace from one who had been exalted by his notice, and played the courtier's part for his favour.

In the meantime, the company he kept, and the small party to which he really belonged, were chiefly composed of the remains of that extreme party which, towards the close of queen Anne's reign, had kept up a dangerous correspondence with the pretender, which ended in their disgrace. For some time previous to that on which we now enter, their hopes had been revived by the birth of an heir to the pretender, Charles Edward, who was born at Rome in 1720. A correspondence was renewed by this party, and an active plot organized, at the head of which was the earl of Orrery, and the earl of Arran, with other peers and gentlemen, of whom the most known was the celebrated Atterbury, who had been one of Orrery's tutors in Oxford. This accounts more satisfactorily for the disfavour of the earl at court; as it is known that the earl of Sunderland kept an active correspondence with the pretender and his adherents, with the private sanction of king George, to whom all their proceedings were thus exposed. Sunderland died early in 1722; and about the same time the conspiracy began to grow more serious. The clue, however, to their proceedings seems to have been lost; for it was in the mouth of many, when the king was preparing to visit his German dominions, that the English minister received a warning from the regent of France, of a conspiracy against the throne. To this was attached a condition, that no one should be put to death. Walpole's intelligence, thus put on the alert, soon unravelled the state of affairs, and found that the pretender was in motion, and that the duke of Ormonde was preparing to take charge of a descent from the coast of Biscay. We cannot here enter into a detailed account; but, among other steps, lord Orrery and the duke of Norfolk were sent to the Tower. The earl was taken into custody on the 27th September, at his country-house, by a party of soldiers, commanded by a colonel, and accompanied by one of the under-secretaries. A thorough search for papers was made, and all his lordship's letters and papers of every description were thrown into a large sack. At the same time, his town house underwent a similar search, and seizure of papers. His nearest friends were denied access to his confinement, and even his son, who entreated to be shut up with him, was refused.

The earl's sufferings were severe; for his health had, for many years, been in an extreme state of delicacy, and had been kept up solely by constant air and exercise. On the 9th of October, the parliament passed a bill for the suspension of the habeas corpus act for one year. It was proposed and agreed to, to detain the earl by virtue of this suspension. He soon fell sick, and his physician, Dr Mead, went to the council, and urged that his life was endangered, and he was, in consequence, admitted to bail. Two noblemen went security for him, in £20,000 each. His liberation was, nevertheless, imperfect, as he was only allowed to remain in his country-house, under the custody of two officers, in whose company he was allowed to take the air. The authority upon which we are chiefly compelled to rely in all that

merely relates to the private history of the earl, is rendered so very doubtful, by a great deal of very obvious folly and misrepresentation, that we shall not enter fully into a variety of minute statements which have too much the air of the clumsy fabrications of an apologist, half deceived and willing to deceive. Budgel received his accounts from the lips of the earl—against whom it is no very serious imputation that he did not unfold circumstances of so questionable a nature, with severe precision, to so shallow a creature.

His lordship obtained his freedom, and continued to attend in the house of lords. He seldom or never spoke; but often joined in protests, and always voted against the government.

His lordship died in 1731, in his fifty-seventh year. Among his accomplishments, the most distinguished was his knowledge of mechanics. Budgel claims for him the invention of that astronomical toy which bears his name; and the manner in which he mentions it makes it plain that lord Orrery was himself his authority. But we rather suspect that his lordship, whose vanity was a besetting infirmity, rather countenanced the mistake than directly asserted such a claim. Budgel says, "The instrument which was invented by him, and bears his name, is an undeniable proof of his mechanic genius. There are so many different motions in this machine, that I have heard his lordship say, it had almost turned the head of that ingenious artificer whom he had employed to make it." We may venture to say, that the "different motions," which nearly "turned the head" of George Graham, are not to be referred to the contrivance of any other brains. The conception involves no very great difficulty, or indeed, any very extraordinary powers of contrivance. There is, however, nothing improbable in the supposition, that the thoughts of such a machine might have originated with his lordship, or, indeed, with any one. He might have proposed to Graham to contrive a machine to represent the motions of the solar system, but even this is negatived by the known facts.

Graham, the inventor of the Orrery, was perhaps not acquainted with the earl, for whom one was constructed by Rawley. The name of "Orrery" was given to it by the error of Sir Richard Steele, who was very probably imposed on by a conversation similar to that related by Budgel. Graham's discoveries and inventions are numerous and important. He was a member of the Royal Society, and abundant records of his astronomical talents and knowledge may be found in the "Philosophical Transactions." He was the constructor of the great mural arch in Greenwich Observatory. Indeed, the whole story is too absurd.

One more circumstance we have reserved for this place. His lordship left his splendid library to Oxford, to the great annoyance of his son; and Budgel, who seems to have thought that his regard for the honour of his former patron was sufficient excuse for the most unnecessary and self-exposing mis-statements, cannot dismiss this slight circumstance without an insinuation. We shall take his entire statement:—"But there is one article in his will, which, as it has made some noise in the world, deserves to be explained: what I shall say upon this head is, to my own certain knowledge, *matter of fact*. The

late lord Orrery has bequeathed to Christ Church College, in Oxford, of which he was formerly a member, all his noble library, save only the journals of the house of lords, and such books as relate to the English history and constitution, which are left to the present earl, his son, who is likewise allowed the term of two years to separate *these* from the other books. The world has been not a little surprised, to find that the late earl of Orrery should leave the bulk of that library he had collected with so much pains and expense, from such a son, who all who have the happiness to know him do very well know, is not only learned, but a real lover of learning and men of letters. In order to explain this mystery, it is proper the public should be informed, that the late lord Orrery's will was made about four years since, at a time when there was an unhappy coldness occasioned by a family dispute between the late earl of Orrery and the present earl of Orkney, soon after the son of the first had married the daughter of the latter. Perhaps neither of these two noble lords were wholly in the wrong." If the statement of Johnson be true—and there is no reason to doubt it—the cause of the quarrel, which should not have been hinted at by a biographer who did not think it fit to state the whole, was simply that the young lord "would not allow his young wife to keep company with his father's mistress." It is unnecessary to say where the wrong lay. The father and son are said to have been reconciled, and that the earl intended to alter his will, but was prevented by death.

## Turlough Carolan.

BORN A.D. 1670.—DIED A.D. 1738.

CAROLAN was the son of a farmer in the village of Hobber, in the county of Westmeath. His father possessed but a few acres, and was not therefore enabled to afford him the advantages of education, nor was his condition in life such as to have pointed out any of the paths of studious pursuit. He might, in all probability, have been destined to the less brilliant, but not less happy or respectable avocations of his father, and lived in industrious but fortunate obscurity, in his little farm; but the accident which appeared to cut him off from the busy haunts of men, and consign him to the lowest state of helpless inutility, seems to have been the means of calling his extraordinary genius into life. While yet an infant, the small-pox deprived him of his eyesight; and his mind, shut in and bereaved of one great field of exertion, transferred itself with the more wholeness to another, or, as he himself was afterwards heard to say, "My eyes are transplanted into my ears." He was too young to appreciate, in its full extent, the deprivation, and if he wasted any very serious thought upon it, he was, from his disposition, far more likely to measure it by the gifts and immunities, the leisure and the song, than by its privations. His astonishing musical powers were quickly noticed; and it may be generally observed, that musical talent, where it exists, is the first to be developed, as the faculties which are more nearly allied to pure intel-



lect are the latest in their order. Carolan's genius was of the highest order, and it soon attracted extensive curiosity, and many liberal friends and patrons, who contributed to its cultivation. A harp and master were procured, and he was quickly enabled to follow the dictates of his fancy and his ear. These were, indeed, but uncultured still; for, with the wilfulness which belongs to internal impulse—the waywardness of genius—he soon became impatient of the dull discipline which is so essential to any perfection. With him the originating power, so rare in every department of human pursuit, was overflowing; he truly “lispéd in numbers.”

He grew in melody as he grew in years, and those tender impressions of passion which nature has so deeply woven with the gifts of verse and song, began to expand in his bosom, and form part of an existence which had so small a sphere to dwell in. To fall in love, was with Carolan a matter of course; though his ideas of beauty—as it is for the most part derived from the sense of which he was not possessed—must have been wholly wanting, or but dimly reflected from the recollections of infancy. The blind alone can tell how fancy can dress out its rayless and formless vision of delight. Miss Bridget Cruise may have had a plain face, and a graceless figure; but we may assume that she was possessed of an enchanting voice: the child of song probably felt with intense reality the power of a loveliness imbodied in sound—a voice replete with soft and pleasant associations played over his breast, when Miss Cruise was near. We know that his passion found its only consolation in an immortal melody which bears the lady's name, and perhaps the image of her lover's dream. It is said that Miss Cruise was not insensible to the passion of her blind lover; but it may be presumed, that every voice, and all the little prejudices of village pride, would deter her from listening to any serious proposal from a blind youth. Every one understands how the fancy will work upon the report of rumour or fame; to such an influence the blind must be unusually liable, and this easily leads to the supposition that Miss Cruise may have been the object of general admiration; and, from such a thought, a little romance of pleased vanity, amiable condescension and wounded affection, is but too ready to start unbidden. But these fancies have no end.

Carolan had the good sense to seek for consolation from the affection of Miss Mary Maguire, with whom one of his biographers has informed us that he lived “harmoniously,” though she was remarkable for extravagance and pride: Carolan himself was a devotee to whiskey; so that we may venture to apprehend that the harmony may have been rather of the loudest. He took a farm at Mosshill, in Leitrim, and launched into a course of reckless and prodigal hospitality, which was both the bent of his nature, and the fashion of his time. The Irish of that day were addicted to extravagance in a degree incredible in this sober and trading age of teetotalism and railroads—the only pledges, then, were pledges over the punch-bowl,—the best kept road was the road to ruin, and a merrier or more crowded way was never known; and on such, Carolan was not likely to be wanting.

After a little time, we find him an itinerant musician. Of this pro-

fession we have already offered some description,\* and shall hereafter add some further remarks. The state of society in Ireland, at that time, was favourable to the tuneful peregrination of the harper. The spirit of old nationality—the rude hospitality—the simple enjoyments, and the remains of those elder prejudices, customs, and opinions that dwelt in the recollections and manners of ancestral times, all favoured, as indeed they strictly comprehended the harper. To those who cared for music—and they were few who did not—his music was far the best; to the rich and proud, he was a part of state; to the retired and simple, his visit was a mission of joy and cheerfulness, a glad event to the young, and full of interest for every class. In that period, when the means of intelligence were far less; before intelligence began to travel on improved systems of roads and conveyances—while the progress of things was yet comparatively slow—an intelligent visitor, who, like the harper, went his stated rounds from hall to hospitable hall, and had for years been contracting kindness and love, in a wide circle of families—most of whom were united in the bonds of kindness—had many kindly things to say, and many reports of deep interest: he was not merely a bearer of mirth and harmony, but of recollections, traditions, and provincial gossip. If he was a man of genius, character and feeling—he gradually accumulated a store of wisdom, wit, humour, local and personal knowledge, which must have given interest and importance to his visit. All this is true for the whole class of travelling harpers, which was not limited to the few whose names are yet remembered. But among these, a few were pre-eminently distinguished for their genius, and the great superiority of their manners and general acquirements. Of such, none stood higher than Carolan; and his biographers relate that he was universally received with distinguishing marks of honour and respect. Of particular incidents we have not many; but it is mentioned that whenever he was satisfied with the hospitality which he had found, it was his custom to repay the kindness of his entertainers with an air composed in their honour, or that of some member of the family. It was in this manner that most of his music was composed. The following extract may help to convey some more distinct notion of his singular powers in his own art. “The fame of Carolan having reached the ears of an eminent Italian music-master in Dublin, he put his abilities to a severe test; and the issue of the trial confirmed him how well founded everything had been, which was advanced in favour of our Irish bard. The method he made use of was, as follows: he singled out an excellent piece of music, and highly in the style of the country which gave him birth—here and there he either altered, or mutilated the piece; but in such a manner, as that no one but a real judge could make a discovery. Carolan bestowed the deepest attention upon the performer while he played it, not knowing however that it was intended as a trial of his skill; and that the critical moment was at hand, which was to determine his reputation for ever. He declared it was an admirable piece of music; but, to the astonishment of all present, said very humorously, in his own language, “*ta se air chois air bacadh*,” that is, here and

\* Vol. iv. p. 374, *et seq.*

there it limps and stumbles. He was prayed to rectify the errors, which he accordingly did. In this state, the piece was sent from Connaught to Dublin; and the Italian no sooner saw the amendments, than he pronounced Carolan to be a true musical genius."

Among the vices of Carolan's generation, there was one which was most likely to have a fatal effect upon one whose profession was in a considerable measure the essential creature of boon fellowship and hospitable profusion—it was the characteristic custom of drunkenness, which tinges the very poetry and sentiment of that day. The bottle, and the jorum, and the sparkling bowl, were words invested with a lyric power, insomuch that when the custom of hard drinking had long begun to diminish in refined society, still poetry continued to shed its charm around those images which have now become appropriately transferred to the alehouse. Long after the days of our harper, "the last of the bards," it was a customary part of hospitality to lock the door, in order to leave no escape for "the ass who refuses his glass." Nor are we without some old recollections of the last generation, which come faintly from afar with jovial echoes upon memory's ear. Some good pictures have been given in the name of Sir J. Barrington of the *general* truth of which we have no doubt. Griffin's novel "The Collegians," contains some rich toned paintings of the same "good old days," which for nature and truth may well be called historical. These allusions will recall much to the reader's mind of the true spirit of those days, in which it was not easy for a minstrel to be sober; and hard drinking was the disease and the inspiration of Carolan: his love of whiskey was the love of a lover,—it was the theme of his most successful strain, and he is said always to have composed his music with a bottle and a glass at his elbow. His physicians assured him at last, that he could not live much longer, unless he gave up drinking. Carolan resolved to comply, and continued for some time to maintain that difficult determination. His spirits became depressed, and he wandered in dejection round the town of Boyle, in which he had for some time dwelt. But the practice had been carried too far, and the want of stimulus had become a constitutional disease; temptations too occurred, and his firmness, after a time, gave way. Among the tales told of Carolan, there is one which, though seemingly absurd, is in reality intensely natural, and a curious instance of the frailness of human virtue, entering into the compromise that can end but seldom in any way but one. He was walking by the grocer's door, when a genial gale from within brought back the fond association, and the vision of whiskey "came upon the soul of Ossian." He entered perhaps without a will,—for a moment the temptation was strong; but prudence and some degree of shame came to his aid, and after a moment's struggle, he addressed the lad behind the counter, "Well, my dear friend, you see I am a man of constancy,—for six long weeks I have refrained from whiskey, was there ever so great an instance of self-denial? But a thought strikes me, and surely you will not be cruel enough to refuse one gratification which I shall earnestly solicit. Bring hither a measure of my favourite liquor, which I shall smell to, but indeed shall not taste." The story goes, that on receiving the grateful fume, his spirit rallied for a moment, and he poured forth his rapture in a vein



of bacchanalian wit, which was worthy of poor Yorick. The tale is, as we have observed, characteristic; though some allowance is to be made for the finical language in which the relater has thought proper to tell it; nor are we sure of the judgment of the grocer's apprentice, who was perhaps the sole witness, in matters of wit.

Such experiments were perhaps often repeated, and the passage from the nostril to the lip—not very long—may have soon afforded an easy example of Napoleon's famous adage, about passing "from the sublime to the ridiculous." The minstrel soon drowned his virtue and fished up his gay spirits in the congenial fountain, and the "measure of his favourite liquor" ceased to pass back as it came to the critic behind the counter. Carolan quickly relapsed into the old habit, and while it renewed its insidious effects upon his health, he regained his wonted powers of minstrelsy. It was perhaps shortly after the foregoing incident, that he composed the famous piece, so well known to every Irish ear, "Carolan's receipt." He composed it with words which have not had so much vitality as his music; they were (we understand) on the praise of whiskey. He was at that time on one of his periodical visits to Mr Stafford at Elphin.

In 1733, he lost his wife to whom he was greatly attached, and the loss affected his spirits deeply for a considerable time; it afforded a subject for his poetic powers, which are said to have been of no inferior order. He was at the time in his sixty-third year, and considerably broken in his frame.

His death happened a few years after, while he was staying at Mrs M'Dermott's of Alderford, in the county of Roscommon. Of his death, several traditionary accounts remain—we shall here give that of his countryman Goldsmith. "His death was not more remarkable than his life. Homer was never more fond of a glass than he. He would drink whole pints of usquebaugh, and as he used to think, without any ill consequence. His intemperance, however, in this respect, at length brought on an incurable disorder; and when just at the point of death, he called for a cup of his beloved liquor. Those who were standing round him, surprised at the demand, endeavoured to persuade him to the contrary, but he persisted; and when the bowl was brought him, attempted to drink but could not; wherefore, giving away the bowl, he observed with a smile, that it would be hard if two such friends, as he and the cup, should part, at least without kissing, and then expired."

## Thomas Southern.

BORN A. D. 1659—DIED A. D. 1746.

SOUTHERN was born in Dublin in 1659, and entered the Dublin University in 1676. He did not continue his academical studies for more than a year, when he quitted Ireland, and went to study law in London. The temper of mind which was impatient of the studies of the University, was not likely to be fixed by the severer attractions of

special pleading. Southern soon turned aside to dally with the lighter muse.

In 1682, the "Persian Prince," his earliest dramatic production, was acted. One of the principal persons of this drama was designed as a compliment to the duke of York, from whom he received a gratuity in return. After the accession of this prince to the throne, Southern obtained an ensigncy in the regiment of earl Ferrers, and served in Monmouth's rebellion. After this was terminated by the capture of that ill-fated nobleman, Southern seems to have left the army and given himself wholly to dramatic composition. He is mentioned as having acquired more money by his plays than any writer up to his time, and to have been the first to obtain a second and third night of representation for the author of a successful play. He also received sums till then unknown for his copyright, and gave larger prices for prologues. Pope notices this, in his lines addressed to Southern, with which we shall close this notice. Dryden having once asked him how much he got by a play—was answered, £700; while, by Dryden's comment on the circumstance, it appears that he had himself never obtained more than £100. This we are more inclined to attribute to the address and prudence of Southern, and to other causes of a more general nature than to any superiority of dramatic power. Any comparison between the two would, indeed, be too absurd; but there is, nevertheless, an important consideration which we can here do no more than merely state. It cannot but be felt—and in later times it has become far too plain to be overlooked—that the acting success of a drama is no criterion of the genius of the writer, or of the intellectual qualities employed in its composition. Considerable talent there, indeed, must be, to secure success; but then it is mainly of that kind which is generally understood by the term *artistic*, and having the nature of skill rather than genius. We are the less desirous to pursue this point, because, in recent times, it has become too plain to be missed by any one. Indeed, some of the most thoroughly successful stageplays of the present generation, indicate to a reader no talent save in the very lowest degree—neither plot, character, passion, sentiment, nor the least power of exciting the smallest interest, unless in strict reference to mere stage effect. The principle appears to be, that it requires little power to awaken human sympathies with present and visible action and scene. Dramatic skill has improved upon the maxim of the Roman critic:—

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, quæque  
Ipse sibi tradit spectator.

The commonest incident, or most ordinary affection of humanity, actually presented to the eye, has on the crowd a more thoroughly awakening and attractive effect, than the noblest conceptions of genius, or the most refined and delicate traits of sentiment or character. In these remarks, we should regret much to be understood to depreciate the consummate art which, in modern fiction—for so far our remark

may be easily extended—renders the very lowest degree of intellectual power available.

Southern\* who has, perhaps, the honour to be the great founder of this our modern school of dramatic production, seems also to have manifested a proportional command of those subordinate talents which have since so much contributed to its success. By the address and dexterity with which he practised the art of disposing of his tickets to the best advantage, he contributed, at the same time, to the success and to the produce of his dramas.

Notwithstanding these remarks, it must be admitted that Southern is, in no small degree, to be exempted from the depreciating estimate which they may be thought to imply. It was long before the stage had reached its full command over the elements of poverty, dryness, and triteness of incident, and attained the maximum of stage effect. Southern has no great power of any kind; but it is evident that to the cultivation of this great end, he adds considerable knowledge of the passions and some poetry. It may also be favourably noticed, that he showed much good taste in freeing the drama from the extravagance and impurity of the day in which he wrote. He was highly thought of by Dryden; Gray also, a far superior critic, praises his pathetic powers. It ought, however, to be a qualification of this praise, that his success was greatly to be attributed to the skill with which he seized on real incidents, which could not, by any clumsiness of treatment, be deprived of their affecting interest. The story of Oroonoko was true, almost to its minutest details. If read under this impression, the reader will see that Southern has not done much; and this is, probably his chief production. The story was first told in a novel by Mrs Behn—who had resided at the scene, been acquainted with the parties, and witnessed the incidents and the catastrophe.

Southern lived to his eighty-fifth year. He lived the latter years of his life in Tothill Street, Westminster, and was remarked to be a constant attendant at the cathedral service. Prior to this he had resided near Covent Garden; and is described by Mr Oldys as a person of grave and venerable exterior, dressed in black, “with his silver sword and silver locks;” and the following notice occurs among Gray’s letters to Horace Walpole—“We have old Mr Southern at a gentleman’s house, a little way off, who often comes to see us. He is now seventy-seven years old, and has almost wholly lost his memory; but is as agreeable an old man as can be—at least I persuade myself so, when I look at him and think of Isabella and Oroonoko.” Dryden appears to have placed him on the same rank with Otway, and is said to have employed him to finish his own tragedy of Cleomenes. The following are Pope’s lines to Southern, on his birth-day in 1742.

Resigned to live—prepared to die,  
With not one sin, but poetry,  
This day Tom’s fair account has run  
Without a blot to eighty-one.  
Kind Boyle before his poet lays  
A table with a cloth of bays;  
And Ireland, mother of sweet singers,  
Presents her harp still to his fingers.



The feast his tow'ring genius marks  
 In yonder wild-goose and the larks !  
 The mushrooms show his wit was sudden,  
 And for his judgment, lo, a pudden !  
 Roast beef, though old, proclaims him stout,  
 And grace, although a bard, devout.  
 May Tom, whom Heav'n sent down to raise  
 The price of prologues and of plays,  
 Be every birth-day more a winner,  
 Digest his thirty thousandth dinner ;  
 Walk to his grave without reproach,  
 And scorn a rascal and a coach.

It is rather curious to observe how nearly Pope's allotment of dinners approaches to the actual number of Southern's days, at the very birth-day which he celebrates. This, with the known minute love of precision which was characteristic of Pope, suggests the idea of a calculation and an oversight. In endeavouring to be precise, the poet forgot that he was setting a very near limit to the days he thus numbered. Southern lived till 1746—four years longer.

### Francis Hutcheson.

BORN A.D. 1694.—DIED A.D. 1747.

HUTCHESON, whose name holds an eminent place in the history of metaphysical philosophy, was the son of a presbyterian minister in the north of Ireland. The precise place of his birth is not mentioned; but he was born, 8th August, 1694. It is said that he displayed early indications of extraordinary intellectual power; and having been first sent to school, somewhere in his native country, where he completed so much of his education as is usually attained in schools—he was, in his sixteenth year, sent to the university of Glasgow, which was mostly preferred to our own university by the Irish dissenters.

In Glasgow he entered upon an assiduous course of study, and made in most branches of human knowledge then pursued, a proficiency suited to his talents, and to the character which he afterwards obtained. Having selected the ministerial profession, he more especially directed his attention to theological studies.

Having thus completed his university career, and mastered a varied and comprehensive course of reading, he returned to his native country; and, after undergoing the ordinary examinations, was admitted as a preacher by the presbyterians. This arrangement was not, however, carried into complete effect, when it was interrupted by an earnest invitation from several persons to whom his talent and acquirements were known, to set up an academy near Dublin. There his success was immediate and very great, but the reputation soon acquired by his first-rate powers was greater still. Ordinary talents are not easily distinguished and require the aid of much industry, address, and prudence, to place them in the light; and for one who becomes eminent, twenty at least of equal pretensions fail: but, men like Hutcheson, even under the most unfavourable circumstances, will soon be observed and dis-

tinguished—in every circle there is some clear-sighted eye; and minds of his class once fairly launched will soon emerge from vulgar competition. Hutcheson had only to come within the observation of Molesworth, Synge, and King, to obtain the allowance and stamp of intellectual station. From the two first-named eminent writers, lord Molesworth, and Dr Synge, bishop of Elphin, he received encouragement and counsel in the publication of his first work, “An Inquiry into the Ideas of Beauty and Virtue.” This work, published anonymously, introduced him to lord Granville, the lord-lieutenant of Ireland at the time. When this nobleman had read the essay, he was so pleased with it that he sent to the bookseller desiring to be informed of the author’s name. The bookseller did not comply, and was then intrusted with a letter for the author, desiring his acquaintance. Hutcheson availed himself of this flattering incident, and was always afterward received with high distinction by that nobleman.

A still more gratifying, as well as advantageous, consequence was the friendship of archbishop King. To the active friendship of this illustrious prelate, he was indebted for two escapes from prosecutions, which have been called, and perhaps truly, malicious, in the archbishop’s court, for setting up a school without subscription to the canons and for not having obtained the bishop’s license. He was no less fortunate in his acquaintance with primate Boulter, whose regard for him is proved by the liberality of an endowment in the university of Glasgow.

In 1728, he published his “Treatise on the Passions,” which at once obtained extensive reputation; and also wrote some papers which were published in a collection, entitled “Hibernicus’ Letters”—in these he discussed the subject of laughter in opposition to Hobbes.

In 1729, his reputation had become widely diffused, so that, in his own department of speculative inquiry, he had no rival. He had also a very considerable, though subordinate, character as a successful schoolmaster. The university of Glasgow, justly regarding him as her own, and acting upon that enlightened and liberal economy which has, in the course of time, so raised the intellectual character of Scotland, offered him the high honour of her chair of moral philosophy. To Hutcheson this was far more than independence and honour; it was peculiarly the vantage-ground for his genius and his tastes. The degree of LL.D. was added; and, as he was preceded by his reputation, disciples from every quarter crowded to drink moral wisdom at the fountain of Glasgow. The popularity of Hutcheson was increased by the combination of zeal with the most expansive benevolence which governed his conduct, and transfused itself into his philosophy. He was unwearied in his endeavours to promote the advancement of every branch of academic acquirement, and especially of the divinity classes.

He enjoyed such good general health, and, seemingly, possessed so good a constitution, that he might well have looked forward to a long period of useful exertion. But he fell a victim to a severe attack of gout in his fifty-third year. He had married soon after settling in Dublin, and had a son, Francis Hutcheson, M.D., who afterwards

published his "System of Moral Philosophy," in three books, Glasgow, 1755.

It would be impossible to enter into a minute and critical examination of the philosophy of Hutcheson, without viewing more fully than would be quite consistent with our general plan, the systems of other writers on moral philosophy. Without this we should commit the injustice of seeming to place to his account the errors which are perhaps inherent in the subject—as they are, at least, common to all by whom it has been treated. We shall, therefore, simply be content to offer a brief general statement of these great fundamental mistakes; after which we shall, with the same brevity, endeavour to offer some estimate of the main tenet of Hutcheson.

The same general tendency to generalize which may be traced in the history of all time and of every part of human knowledge, was developed, in its most vicious form, in the middle ages. We have had frequent occasions to notice its effects on intellectual philosophy. It also had its effects on moral philosophy.

To begin with the simplest principles, and reduce all known phenomena to the most elementary origin, is, accordingly, the uniform endeavour of the casuist; and in this, two great errors have been almost uniformly committed, to an extent almost difficult to believe. First, with regard to abstract principles—they are assumed, or attempted to be fixed at a point *anterior to any possible means of ascertaining them*—they begin before the beginning of human knowledge. The series of causes, like the golden chain described by Homer, begins in the nature and secret counsels of the Supreme Mind; and if the *abstract* and elementary principles of justice and virtue, of good and ill, have any existence, it is not to be discerned by the casuist, or found in his perplexed inquiries. The *declared law* of the Author of all goodness and wisdom, is clear as day-light. The moral and physical constitution of human nature is practically ascertained enough, together with the several laws of conduct, both instituted and conventional, and the various interests which arise from it—so far as they *follow* from these, the principles of right and wrong, of good and evil, &c., are thoroughly understood: they ask no casuist to define them. And any difficulty worthy of serious attention, will be found in the perplexity of the special case to which these principles may have to be applied—as, for instance, when there are various clashing rights or interests to be adjusted. And it is for the clearing of such questions alone, that casuistry is worth anything. The question, therefore, as to the *nature* and *origin* of justice, &c., is not the reasonable foundation of this branch of inquiry; not that this origin, or this abstract nature, do not exist, but because we know nothing about them.—To have any value, philosophy must begin with positive law and the reality of things.

Secondly. From this we arrive at the next great source of perplexity among the casuists. Of the last-mentioned principles, the constitution of nature branches into several important derivative principles, in the application of which the most considerable errors and differences arise. And it is on these that we should be compelled to digress largely into several statements and estimates of numerous



writers, whom we shall here pass with the summary charge of having respectively adopted some one of several co-ordinate elements, and, by great ingenuity, endeavoured to render it the foundation of their whole system. As this censure is in some degree applicable to all, we shall now at once return to Hutcheson, as offering a very sufficient illustration.

The fundamental principle of Hutcheson's philosophy is benevolence. In this he supposes virtue to consist, and reduces to it all the other virtuous affections of the mind. If the general or etymological sense of this term were to be assumed, it must be allowed that its enlarged comprehension might, without further inquiry, be offered as a term coextensive with all the systems of virtue which have good in any form for their object. But Hutcheson understands the word in its idiomatic sense of good will towards others. It is at once apparent by what species of constructive arguments, the great variety of familiar and explicit motives which bear the general character of virtuous, and have good for their end, must be interpreted, to convert them into results of *human* benevolence. The general fallacy is, in fact, a confusion between the *intention* and the *actual result*. It is but a necessary consequence of Hutcheson's principle, that he rejects the error which generally prevailed among the casuists before him: that of resolving all human motives into self-love. There is, indeed, a curious illustration of the little value of human systems, to be derived from the existence of so strange an *opposition*. The exclusion here mentioned, has not, however, the merit of originating from a clear view of the error, neither does it place the principle on its true grounds. This praise belongs to bishop Butler. In truth, this was rendered unattainable to Hutcheson, by the very principle of his theory. His end of action having sole reference to others, must needs entirely exclude the regard to *self* in every form. That the reader may more fully understand the nature of this correction of an error, which is not yet quite excluded from opinion—the selfish principle may be thus expressed:—"We do good to others, because it is in some way pleasurable to ourselves." The answer to this fallacy is to show that it does not explain the simple fact of the pleasurable emotion itself. It assigns a cause which is itself the thing to be explained.

The main practical proof on which Hutcheson relies, is the general sense, that the mixture of any selfish motive takes away from the merit of an action. The fallacy of any inference from this in support of his theory is, however, too palpable to be dwelt on; the *theory* is evidently taken for granted in the *proof*: there is also an equivocation implied. It may be admitted, to be sure, that a theory of pure benevolence must be subject to such a deduction—a motive of self-regard must, of course, be an admissible deduction from any profession of pure regard to others. But the allowance can be no further applied. Beyond this the argument is resolvable to mere affirmations, and terminates in the definition of a term. The word virtue may be so defined as to exclude prudence, fortitude, self-control, and the disciplined moral sense. But as we have said, the main source of Hutcheson's error consists in not having observed the important distinction between the results of actions and the motives of the action; be-

tween affections of the mind and consequences of conduct. In consequence of this fatal oversight, he speaks as if every impulse of the mind must have its foundation in a previous deliberation on the elementary laws of social wellbeing. According to this view, it is plain that all motions must, in some way, terminate in benevolence—from the soldier who wades in blood, to the awful justice which commands and represses the tender impulses of pity to pronounce the dreadful sentence, and condemn the wretch who must die for the public good. Assuredly, if the virtuous motives here supposed to govern, are to be assigned to benevolence, there must be benevolence of very varied and very opposite kinds. In truth, a virtuous action is one which immediately proceeds from a virtuous motive; and the subject is altogether confused and perplexed by the common method of those numerous casuists, who look further than the direct motive, in which not only no confusion could arise, but scarcely a difference. These differences have all arisen from the ingenious quibbling by which any one motive can be deduced from any other. “Those three systems,” observes Adam Smith, “that which places virtue in propriety; that which places it in prudence; and that which makes it consist in benevolence, are the three principal accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue. To one or other of them, all the other descriptions of virtue, how different soever they appear, are easily reducible.” Casuists appear to deal in *easy virtue*. As for us, who do not aspire to the heights of any kind of philosophy, we hold that the good and evil deeds of men are not, in ordinary conduct, the result of any theory of public good, to comprehend which demands a life devoted to unwearied study, with abilities of no low order. The great Creator of man has variously endowed him with affections which are subservient to the design of social life. Of these the workings and immediate moving causes and tendencies are various. So far as they can be called virtue, they are ruled by a disciplined sense of obligation, and by habitual inclination, in conformity with express laws, established conventions, and defined interests. They may well be called *beneficent*; but they cannot be generically termed *benevolent*. On the contrary, they have their several private and particular ends, and give rise to actions, habits, and lines of conduct, in which the agent has no sentiment or motive beyond the immediate satisfaction of a desire, the promotion of an interest, or fulfilment of a duty, directly the object of his mind, and without any contemplation of the general principle or the remote end. Of the whole, it is true, there is a general design, based on some elementary principle or principles, but for which these casuists will ever search in vain. The ultimate law may be benevolence—but if so, it is the benevolence of God.

We cannot precisely tell in what *abstract* obligation consists, nor in what it begins;—of abstract right and wrong, or abstract virtue, we know nothing. But the first point at which they become the distinct object of human cognizance is a different question. Human obligation begins in certain laws declared or implied. In conformity to these laws, is *virtue* to be found, and those affections which tend to this conformity are virtuous affections. But an *act* may be good in its *tendency*, and such as the most heroic virtue would dictate, and yet be not only not

virtuous, but vicious. Thus there is a maxim, that it is in the prudent regard of every individual to his own interest that the public good is best promoted—and that is generally true; but, assuredly, in this prudence there is no benevolence, unless by great courtesy of construction: nor, indeed, for the most part, any virtue but of the lowest kind—a keen and intelligent self-interest. But while the individual obtains the benefit—which is all that he has thought of—a small portion of unthought-of good is added to the aggregate good of the system; and this, if traced at all to *design*, must be attributed only to the Designer who comprehends and overrules the whole.

On this view,—while it condemns Hutcheson's theory, in common with most others,—yet it leads to a consideration much to his praise. The ultimate result of the virtuous affections is clearly coextensive with an enlarged scheme of benevolence. It also aptly harmonizes with the spiritual economy of the law of God as revealed in the New Testament—the “first and great commandment,” and the second which “is like unto it.

But we forbear from entering further on a diffusive topic. We have no very high opinion of the utility of systems of casuistry. It seems to be the only subject which is least understood by those who have devoted their lives to its study. The truths of morality drop spontaneously from the poet's pen and the preacher's tongue, and there are few well-taught men in civilized society, who do not think more correctly than any systematic writer, except Butler, whose practical chapter on moral discipline, is worth all that we can recollect to have met with on ethical philosophy. Men do not act from theories, but from laws, customs, and the complex tendencies which passions, sentiments, and habits, together, or separately, produce. Laws and institutions have their origin, *primarily*, in the will of God; and, *secondarily*, in the *whole constitution* of human nature. They exist in very various forms, and change according to circumstances which determine or arise from the social state,—while the natural affections and the institutions of nature remain still the same, as first impressed by Him who launched the planet on its path. Those first intuitions are not to be analyzed; they are prime elements, and all attempts to derive them from something else, must end in specious nonsense. A true system of moral philosophy must commence with a full and distinct enumeration of all the moral elements separately considered, and proceed, by a careful inquiry, into their effects in human life, under all its aspects and stages of existence. It is from the clear and thorough understanding of the separate and constituent elements, that the system which involves their mutual relations can be discerned.

### Sir Hans Sloane.

BORN A.D. 1660.—DIED A.D. 1752.

ALEXANDER SLOANE was the head of the Scottish colony in Ireland in the reign of James I.; he was collector of taxes for the county of Down. His son—the subject of this memoir—was born at Kilileagh,



in that county, in 1660. His taste for natural history was early remarkable: and his disposition was so intensely studious that in his sixteenth year of age he was attacked by a spitting of blood which caused great fear for his life, and confined him for three years to his chamber. On his recovery he applied himself to the study of medicine, and especially to chemistry and botany. To pursue these studies with more advantage, he visited London, where he remained four years; he there became acquainted with Boyle and Ray, from each of whom he obtained much valuable counsel and aid in his favourite studies.

From London he went on to Paris, where he derived a considerable accession to his knowledge from the lectures of Duberney and Tournefort; and, perhaps, still more from his botanical excursions with Magnal, an eminent botanist of Montpellier.

On his return, his acquirements in his favourite pursuit were very great, and he was enabled to communicate much both of information and valuable specimens to Ray, who frequently acknowledges his obligation in his "History of Plants." Sloane now became acquainted with the illustrious Sydenham, who took him into his house and endeavoured to advance his professional interests.

But Sloane's adoption of the medical profession was chiefly the effect of his love of botany—a branch of knowledge which seems to require some very peculiar turn of intellect not easy to describe, but easily observed in those who attain decided success in its pursuit. He abandoned his apparently fair prospects for the love of the favourite and absorbing pursuit, and accepted the situation of physician to the duke of Albemarle, who was going out as governor to Jamaica. The temptation was unquestionably at that time too great to be resisted. The vegetable nature of America, and still more of its tropical islands and shores, was an unexplored field, interesting for the rich promise it offered to the curious zeal of inquiry, as well as for the questions which were entertained upon the subject. The botanist had, till then, confined his research to Europe, and the range, therefore, for Sloane's more adventurous curiosity, was vast, and necessarily profuse of novel interest and discovery. There had been, till then, a doubt entertained by the most learned botanists whether the vegetable productions of the New World were not wholly different from those of the old continents. The doubt was set at rest by a catalogue of plants collected in Jamaica identical with European specimens. Sloane, in addition to eight hundred specimens of West Indian plants, also brought a rich collection of animal specimens. His labours were also eulogized by his contemporaries for the astonishing industry they evinced; having only remained fifteen months in Jamaica. On the death of the duke of Albemarle, he returned to London.

In 1694, he was elected physician of Christ's Hospital, and must have made a very rapid advance in his profession: for, in addition to the inference to be derived from the fact of this preferment, it is known that he was independent of its emoluments. These he received, but it was only to return them to the Hospital for the extension of its advantages, and for the relief of its poorer inmates.

In 1693, he had been elected secretary to the Royal Society, and, by his

exertion and influence, revived the publication of its transactions which had been for some years discontinued—to these he was himself a frequent contributor.

In 1695, he married a daughter of Alderman Langley.—And, in 1697, published his “Catalogue of the Native Plants of Jamaica.”

In 1701, he became possessed of a valuable museum collected by his friend Mr William Courteen; this collection greatly enlarged that which his own industry had formed, and which, at his death, became the foundation of the British Museum.

In that period the species of knowledge to which Sloane was devoted, occupied proportionally a higher share of public estimation than at any subsequent period. It was still haloed round by the visionary lights of alchemy and enchantment; though these hallucinations of mankind had been dissipated, there lingered an imaginary charm about the objects in which they had been conversant: while, at the same time, the opposite impulse which has its origin in sober reason, gave no less importance to researches which tended to restore the fields, skies, and elements, to the empire of reality. The higher and more intellectual sciences had at that time but recently been developed by Newton, and his contemporaries. And the mere collections of curious research, always valuable as materials for knowledge, had then a far higher importance than the very sciences to which they have since given rise, or been the foundation. The industry of Sloane had surpassed his contemporaries, and his singular munificence had extended the results of his industry—his skill, as a physician, increased his intercourse, and gave a more sterling value to his claims. The Transactions of the Royal Society, in the publication of which he took an active part, and to which he was a constant and useful contributor, placed him in immediate contact with the ablest men of his day. The consideration of this combination of circumstances enables us to understand the high consideration which seems to have attached to Sloane, beyond any pretension in his intellectual character, or in the importance of his discoveries. Eminent worth—unquestionably the highest claim to respect—unless when accompanied by elevated station and commanding power, can leave little to the record of human praise. The munificence which has left durable bequests to the British public has well earned the meed of national gratitude; but, when the fact is written, all that can be added is the sounding amplification of eulogy—too often abused to have much value. We offer these reflections, as we trust they may enable the reader to understand, more fully, the necessity under which we are compelled to offer an account of this illustrious physician and virtuoso, far from commensurate with the important position which he filled in society. In truth, it is only when intellectual pretension is backed by far more popular attractions, that men of the highest order can well take their place in the world's eye; and the popular manner and graceful address will, to a great extent, dispense with the more sterling claim: and thus it has been, and still is, that popular distinction is often hard to be understood by those who fail to penetrate the true secret of public favour. A commanding fame, like Newton's, could shine through the clouds of unpopularity, and command respect,

and admiration, without courting favour; but the station conceded to Newton's pre-eminence, was, on his death in 1727, conferred on Sloane, a more popular character. This fact is, however, not invidiously mentioned here, notwithstanding the prejudice of comparisons; Sloane was eminently deserving of all honour; and his elevation to the president's chair, in the Royal Society, was a just tribute to worth, munificence, zeal for science, and professional skill. We believe that, on this occasion, it was that he presented one hundred guineas to the Society, and a bust of Charles II.

His medical reputation was such as to place him in the foremost rank. He had been constantly consulted by queen Anne, whom he attended in her last illness. On the accession of George I. he was created a baronet, and appointed physician-general to the army. In 1727, he was appointed physician to George II.

In 1733, when he had attained his seventy-third year, he began to feel the necessity of contracting his scope of activity: he now resigned the presidency of the Royal College of Physicians, to which he had been elected in 1719. In his eightieth year, his resignation of the presidentship of the Royal Society was received by this distinguished body with marks of high respect. He had, some time previous, purchased the manor of Chelsea, and established there a botanic garden, which he gave to the apothecaries' company on condition of a quitrent of £5; and the annual delivery of fifty different specimens of plants to the Royal Society, till the number presented should amount to two thousand. Having experienced the injurious effects of an illness consequent on the severe winter of 1739, he now thought it full time to relinquish his profession, to the fatigues of which he found his strength unequal, and removed from Bloomsbury to his Chelsea manor. In this retreat he still continued to receive persons of rank and distinction, and was often visited by the royal family. He also continued to give medical advice to all who came to consult him, and showed the most obliging attention to those who came to see his museum. Though feeble, he still retained the entire possession of his intellect, and was free from disease. His decline was gentle, and he was accustomed to express his wonder at finding himself still alive. He died at last, after a few days' illness, and without suffering. At his death he left legacies to all the hospitals in London. His death took place on the 11th January, 1753, in his ninety-second year.

His museum he left to the public, on the condition that £20,000 should be paid to his executors. According to his own estimate, the whole collection was worth four times the sum; so that the value of this splendid legacy, to England, may be estimated at £60,000. In the collection, there were gold and silver coins which, as bullion alone, would have brought £7000, besides also numerous precious stones, and a library of 50,000 volumes, many of the most costly description. The government took the offer, and paid the stipulated sum. There was an act passed for the purchase of Sir Hans Sloane's collection, with that of the earl of Oxford, at the time offered for sale by his daughter, the duchess of Portland, and for placing all together with the Cottonian library. They were accordingly collected and



arranged in Montague House, in Bloomsbury, and formed the commencement of the British Museum, which was first opened to the public in 1759.

This last act of Sir Hans Sloane's life is his great and true claim to the grateful memory of England. In that splendid national institution the students of nature may find his monument; there the memorials of his unwearied and successful devotion to their favourite pursuits still claim the tribute of veneration, and breathe their "*circumspice*" to those who look for his monument.



HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION  
TO FIFTH PERIOD,

EXTENDING

FROM THE ACCESSION OF GEORGE III. TO HIS DEATH.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

OF

**Distinguished Irishmen** .

WHO FLOURISHED DURING THAT PERIOD.





# HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

## FIFTH PERIOD.

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**Prefatory Remarks.**—This period one of transition—Outline of events, constitutional change in England—General party changes—Religion—Literature, arts, and general civilization.

*Prefatory Remarks.*—Before we enter upon the most interesting and important division of those memoirs which yet remain to be written, it becomes necessary to call the attention of our readers to several considerations, connected with the changes which must now affect the execution of our work. Through a long succession of obscure, but yet violent changes, for the most part too irregular in their operation, and too much attributable to the working of external and accidental forces for the orderly and progressive course of regular history—we have at length arrived at that point at which, for the most part, regular history stops. If this has any truth, with relation to the history of other great countries, in which a settled and unbroken progress of constitutional causes has advanced from early times to the present—how much more must it be felt in the anomalous records of Ireland. Here the steps of civil and social progress have moved fitfully, with long pauses and sudden starts. Nor has it often been allowed to occur, that the advance, which is ever the unforced and inevitable result of national tranquillity, has been suffered to put forth its blossoms and mature its fruits, uninterrupted by the storm and flood of commotion and terror. A sense of insecurity has become indigenous. Our civil atmosphere has been surcharged with a menace and a gloom which few have been willing to abide, whose means could afford, or whose interests demanded, a more still and salubrious clime. The civilizing influence of refined luxury, and the enriching powers of commerce, have been repelled by causes which it would be great injustice to charge as imputations to the discredit of the Irish people. But we cannot avoid saying,—as it is a consideration by which our remaining task must be materially affected,—that it is so replete with the materials of reproach to individuals and to bodies of men—so full also of painful depreciation, even where praise is to be allowed—and so beset at every step with necessary dissent from opinions formed in the heat of party contention, and unfit to bear the touchstone of historical indifference, that it will be hard to pass clear from censures which, we frankly

confess, we would, if possible, avoid, through this unsafe and uncertain period. In a former introduction it was our endeavour to show, that the incidents with which we had mainly to deal, were free from any essential connexion with the party quarrels to which they have been forcibly annexed by the mendacity of faction. Even for the effort, we have not escaped from censure. Other countries look to the present and the future; but Irish politicians will, in despite of truth and discretion, lash their country to the remote past, and contend on insults and grievances, which, in the course of nature, are buried, and, in prudence, ought to be forgotten.

But such a resource no longer remains. Our history is now become the living and raging torrent of the present generation. Not, indeed, we must say, that it should be thus; for within these few years changes have taken place, which might suggest the prudence of trying for a while the effects of tranquil encouragement to the arts of peace. But so it is—nor can we,—to take one example,—approach that bygone fact, the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland, without an unpleasant sense of constraint, arising from the consideration, that in Ireland it remains a debatable question, to excite angry, though unreasonable feelings. In the whole history of that most stirring and momentous interval of Ireland's most eminent men, it is the same—every name the password of faction, every step over passions, prejudices, and animosities:

. . . . . per ignes  
Suppositos cineri doloso.

Flood, Grattan, Charlemont, and the long list of honoured names which come to the memory when their names are mentioned, bring associations difficult to be avoided by those who are most likely to think of them with interest. We recollect, it is true, the well-merited compliments which have been paid to some of the biographers of the same period, for the discretion with which they have threaded their way through this class of difficulties. We perfectly concur in the praise so earned; but our task is, to some extent, different. Our undertaking is qualified by a condition which does not, in all cases, permit us to turn aside at will from that which is delicate or embarrassing. We may, it is true, and are in duty bound to avoid touching on the tender points of family pride or sensibility. We are not, and cannot, be bound to rake up the cinders of forgotten scandal for the public. But still we have undertaken to write history; and there are truths to be written, and acts of justice to be done, which, so far as his private feelings are concerned, the biographer might well desire to avoid. Such is the description of one very important circumstance attendant upon our entrance into the period now remaining. With respect to more recent events which have occurred within our own generation, they are excluded from any very prominent place in these pages, by the happy circumstance, that their principal actors are still alive.

There is another very essential circumstance, which, though it has hitherto much interfered with the uniformity of our narrative, must now become one of its peculiar conditions. Not a few of our greatest men, in every department, have found their sphere of action in the



political and literary circles of London. In men like Burke and Sheridan, Ireland has paid back to England her old hereditary debt, for the many illustrious scions which have been planted and thriven in her soil. We shall be called on to exert much nice discretion in touching on the great field of European politics, in which Irish statesmen and warriors have borne not merely a forward, but a foremost part. Men whose minds have given a stamp to the age, have sprung from Irish blood, and in despite of her isolation, have secured to their country her place among the nations of modern Europe. Among the most prominent consequences which this circumstance must have upon the method which we have hitherto adopted, there is one of which it may be expedient that the reader should be apprised. Instead of pursuing the strictly chronological order, which has hitherto been our main principle of arrangement, it will be in some measure necessary to group our persons according to the place and general character of their lives. By this means we shall evidently avoid the necessity of prolix repetitions of the same series of historical incidents. The period of British and Irish history which especially requires this precaution, is one singularly distinguished by the magnitude and rapid accumulation of the events which both the divisions thus suggested would comprise. The marked events of Irish history in the latter end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, called forth a rich and brilliant display of character and talent. The history of England is, in a different way, no less distinguished for characters and events of the very first magnitude. According to that arrangement, we shall be enabled to follow out a distinct outline of the history of this country, under the lives of Charlemont, Flood, Grattan, and a few more names less fortunately connected with their country's records; while the memoirs of Burke and Castlereagh are successively connected with the most momentous events which are contained in the records of modern history—perhaps, indeed, (for the importance of these events is not yet fully ascertained,) in the records of time.

*The period one of transition.*—To trace with tolerable precision the vast changes of which the development begins to become perceptible, from the commencement of the period now to occupy our attention, would require a volume to itself. We shall avail ourselves of the many occasions which must present to illustrate a subject of such deep and pregnant interest: but it is here our chief purpose to offer a more general and elementary sketch than the object of the succeeding narratives will permit, of those great political processes which will be more or less involved in the entire tone of the subsequent memoirs, and which will, at some future period, be generally understood to constitute the characteristic interest of the history of the present century. The period from which we are next to borrow our character and colouring, is pre-eminently a period of *transition*. This is the principle by which all the future details of these volumes will be governed, and which, whether much or little expressed, will be a prime element involved throughout. The reader cannot have it too distinctly in view. For this reason it must, in this preliminary statement, be our chief object to offer some needful expositions, which might here-

after be felt to embarrass the narrative, or break the interest of those details in which they may be most required.

The most cursory reader of newspapers, if he has even a superficial acquaintance with the state of his own times, is aware, generally, of the magnitude of the events—the rapidity of the practical discoveries in science, and improvements in art—the changes in manners—the increase of wealth—the diffusion of knowledge—and the democratic tendency which has shown itself in political opinions and events. These broad features are such as to have escaped not even the intelligent peasant's attention. And it may be also as distinctly recognised, that the progress of these changes has been in the main marked by a very obvious *acceleration*, which, though subject to apparent occasional retardations, has yet considerable marks of uniformity, when amidst the complication of the moving scene, the eye begins to detect and trace the currents and forces of human tendency.

Of this, the elementary principle is one of extreme simplicity, and by no means such as to demand any ingenuity to detect. We cannot here, for obvious reasons, go far into elementary investigation, and must be satisfied with that degree of expansion which may be sufficient to lead intelligibly to our intended applications. It would, assuredly, much advantage every portion of our future task, could we, within the requisite bounds, convey clear and well-defined notions upon those moral, intellectual, and physical wants and powers, by means of which the first rude elements of civilization, when once committed to their agency, are nurtured and developed; the law by which this development gains progress; the means by which it is variously modified, interrupted, and transferred; the laws of its retardations and accelerations, and those by which it is preserved. Such is the rough outline of the theory, to some broken portions of which we must now for a moment beg the thoughtful attention of the reader. From the very beginning of time, a gradual accumulation of the elements of civilization can be vaguely traced, with still increasing distinctness. It has, however, been always subject to the action of external forces, so violent as not only to retard its progress, but to alter its place and direction: this is the main lesson of ancient history. Civilization appears to have advanced by long stages—to have received apparent checks—to have changed its climate, and reappeared wearing some new features, and with some new elements of progress. Looked upon without regard to partial or local interruptions, it will appear to have travelled from climate to climate, gathering from each some varied element; and from age to age, uniformly accumulating breadth and depth. In the descent of ages, and amid the revolutions of dynasties and empires, the knowledge and experience of each great period of time has been transmitted, to be augmented and improved in the following. Two general causes have given to the progress thus described its character of *acceleration*: first, and chiefly, the increase which every part of progress is likely to derive from the increase of all the rest. This, as a general principle, demands no great reflection to perceive, though in detail it would be too difficult and complex to be followed, unless in a book devoted to the subject: it is the vast science of which political economy

is but a chapter. The second is more evident still: with the advance of knowledge and all the arts of life, the proportion of the more wealthy and informed classes has a tendency to increase; and, with this increase, many causes of progress become increased or developed. Thus, as the aristocratic principle in early stages has gradually gained ground upon the despotic,—the democratic, in its turn, has gained upon both. But let us for a moment pause; we are upon perilous ground. There never, perhaps, was a period in which it is more imperatively a duty to be guarded in the statement of such general principles, than at the present, when the maxims of political science have acquired a certain degree of popular currency. In a free statement of the principle of human progress, it is not to be concealed that we necessarily state also the elementary principle of democracy, the principle of which has been glaringly mis-stated by a large class of popular writers and orators. The democrat and the revolutionary journalist have placed it on grounds not only false, but pernicious; such, indeed, as to give it a dangerous tendency, which it does not otherwise possess. The “rights of man,” the “will of the people,” and all such other phrases, as they have been commonly applied, involve the utter denial of all rights, and the dissolution of society; they who use such language, either mean something else which it does not express, or use the words merely as the trumpet-notes of sedition.

The principle is strictly this, that the effect of social progress is a growing tendency to *equalization*. This is, however, a merely theoretic result, to which, according to strict science, there would be a perpetual approach, as to an infinitely distant point—the perfection of the social state—of this the moral impossibility can easily be proved. The social system is radically founded on two distinct first principles; first, on *positive institution*, in the consideration of which we are here unconcerned; and secondly, on the *natural inequalities* of mankind—inequality of physical strength—of intellectual powers—of moral temper—so that, if the crowd were supposed to start fairly from the most perfect level, very few years could pass without a despotism or aristocracy, and a system of coercive institutions, adapted more or less to the rude first stages of national existence. The result of all human progress is, as we have stated, a modified equalization, and a remote approach towards a state which cannot have existence without a radical alteration in human nature. Such a vision, indeed, appertains to those visionaries who have raved about the *perfectibility* of man, and urged the dissolution of society. And we must here, by the way, observe, that if a certain class of some English historians and biographers who have recently been eloquent in praising the philosophy of Jacobinism—spoken of the “enlightened science” of the national convention, and called the radical demolition of the social state in France “a great progress of regeneration,”—had any precise notion of the science thus rashly named, they would have at once perceived the utter absurdity of the clever and eloquent visionaries, whose frantic ravings so widely misled the intellect of nations, in despite of those practical results which contradicted them so soon and so entirely.

The real progressive equalization of which it here concerns us to speak clearly and distinctly, is no enforced or revolutionary demolition



of orders and privileges. It is the visibly spontaneous result of those ameliorations arising from commerce and knowledge, as they become diffused; by means of which the inferior ranks grow richer and wiser, and in virtue of which, the increase of wealth and the expansion of national mind have continued to broaden from age to age, and the productive and inventive powers of the entire mass to increase. Hence the *acceleration* to which we adverted, and which we consider to be the peculiar characteristic of modern times.

There is, however, another essential principle in which these considerations are largely involved. So far as we have gone, the *revolutionary* character of the period before us remains untouched; we have undertaken to view it as a period of transition. At first sight it might seem to be the inference from all that we have stated—that those abrupt stages in the progress of nations, which are termed revolutions, are un contemplated in the general law of progress. The contrary is, however, the truth; and hence the real necessity for the wide compass of our remarks. There is an antagonistic principle essential to the existence of society. If rightly considered, those great constitutional structures of law and civil government, which are essential to civilized society, are not, and never have been, (we think never can be,) of the same elastic and progressive character as those causes which we have previously pointed out. They may be more or less elastic in their texture; but, simply considered, are the principle of stability, opposed to, and governing the principles of change. The one partakes of the spontaneous characters of nature; the other of art. One is independent of human design, and advances unobserved; the other, though overruled by many causes, is originated in the wisdom or folly of statesmen and councils. But the law of civil institutions is here to be noted for its stationary character. It stands still, and sets bounds to the growing structure of society.\* The uncalculated expansion of moral and intellectual forces and

\* This elementary truth is of some importance to those who would wish to investigate the foundations and primary laws of civil society. We do not recollect to have seen it explained as we think its importance deserves. The forces which preserve a system of polity, and those which advance national progress, are, in some respects, antagonistic forces. The latter we have fully stated above; the other consists in a combination of powers. There are some of them, as, for instance, *opinion*, common to both; others, as laws, institutions, and the administrative and deliberative powers which reside in councils, senates, and individuals, when taken together, and viewed in strict reference to the principle here stated, constitute the *conservative*, and, at the same time, the *retarding* power. The mutual opposition of these principles is an inherent necessity in the state of man, and not as the demagogue would imply, an evil to be removed by violence. It holds a line which, however shifted, must continue somewhere to be found, till man becomes both all-wise and all-just. The principle here stated, though it carries with it some appearance of refining, yet when clearly announced, is almost, if not entirely, axiomatic. If the reader should desire to look very closely into the elementary constitution of this antagonism, it depends on several causes; first, the fact that political foresight can see but doubtfully, and but a little way—the wisest man can no more regulate the remote progress of events, than he can add a cubit to his stature; and as it often happens that ultimate progress is to be attained by immediate and general evils, the little that human wisdom can see must operate rather to the discouragement, than the promotion of changes. Secondly, the mere fact that the advances of human progress are spontaneous, indefinite, and not, for the most part, such as to indicate any very obvious course of legislative

requisitions—the wide increase of wants and refinements—the altered form and symmetry of the frame of things—goes on for ages, accumulating strength and pressure, until, at last, some moment *must of necessity* arrive, when there is a balance of the two great antagonistic forces; and at such a point, for reasons obvious enough, they may long continue in equilibrium, which would be fearful, but that, like some fatal affections of the heart, it offers no perceptible symptoms, till some seemingly slight incident gives the fatal impulse, which is no more to be checked than the avalanche when it has left its point of suspension. Some imagined accident, itself in reality a result of the disease, gives the fatal signal, and the ancient shell begins to sever into flaws, or bursts asunder with portentous ruin, and frees the pent elements of human progress, with the ruin, perhaps, of a generation of mankind—for we should not pass on without observing, that of revolution the immediate event is uncertain; it has always fearful oscillations, and though beneficial when viewed with reference to ages and the advance of mankind, to the place of its origin, it is at best a cure through the means of disease—the operation may bring life or death. But to return.

These are but general facts, our special duty will be to point their application to the period before us. The best illustrations of this will arise in the memoirs of eminent individuals, whose names are inseparable from the political, literary, and social history of their times. A few very cursory outlines must be enough in this place.

*Outline of events.*—As the application of these general principles is the main object of this illustration, we shall be here content to notice the great characteristic events of this period no further than this purpose may require. More detailed notices of the same events must form a principal portion of our subsequent labours. To appreciate distinctly either the great constitutional changes, or the moral, social, and intellectual advances, on which we design to dwell more fully, it may be useful to many of our readers to have in mind some such general sketch of the great causal events as we shall now very briefly offer. In looking back to trace the beginnings of that great revolution, of which the whole history of modern times is but an account, it is vain to inquire for the first event; the most penetrating sagacity

expediency, while the repeal or enactment of a law is necessarily encumbered with forms, discussions, oppositions, and all the accumulation of prepossession and ignorance, which must retard the decisions of every deliberative body. Lastly, there is, both in individuals, as well as in corporate institutions, an inseparable tenacity of power. Without this, it is evident that no power could exist. It is the essential vitality of a system. That life, which, though it may be but a step to a better state, cannot be yielded without a struggle, because the transition is through the gates of death. Man, we know, is destined to rise again from the empire of the grave; but when a nation is sick to death, there is no consolatory assurance but in the physician, who can retard the menaced disruption of the vital powers, and by firm resistance govern and guide to sane issues those spontaneous efforts, which, when they set in, cannot be repressed, and may not with certainty be overruled. The powers which advance the world, without the counteraction of these powers which retard, are the same which would terminate in the destruction of States. It is not by its *wisdom*, but by its *wants*, that public will operates for good; it is a blind force, but it is one of the forces of *nature*. After all, the resisting power is but another. Both are essential; the extremes to which both are ever tending are the evils to be feared.



can but trace a little farther back ; and wherever the understanding can first clearly reach the precise social workings of any place and time, that will seem to be the beginning. While, throughout, those moral and political workings which we have endeavoured to define, have been gaining the point of efficient power, and throwing out occasional, local, and partial indications, seldom to be rightly comprehended till seen afar from the vantage-ground of time. An attentive observation, directed either to popular history, or to the conflict of political opinions and the expositions of public writers and speakers, or still more to the general impressions of the public mind, as manifested in private circles, cannot fail very clearly to perceive how confused a notion of the real progress of the current of human affairs is obtained by those who seem to be most actively engaged or keenly interested in the movements of their own day. We have more than once adverted to this remarkable truth, and feel here tempted to quote a passage from one of the letters of Sir Walter Scott, in which it is very strikingly expressed. Having alluded to Walpole's memoirs of the last ten years of George II., he proceeds, "It is acrid and lively, but serves, I think, to show how little those who live in public business, and, of course, in constant agitation and intrigue, know about the real and deep progress of opinions and events. The memoirs of Sir George Mackenzie are of the same class; both immersed in little political detail, and the struggling skirmish of party, seem to have lost sight of the great progressive movements of human affairs. They put me somewhat in mind of a miller, who is so busy with the clatter of his own wheels, grindstones, and machinery, and so much employed in regulating his own artificial mill-dam, that he is incapable of noticing the gradual swell of the river from which he derives his little stream, until it comes down in such force as to carry his whole manufactory away before it."\*

The advance of intelligence and wealth had long been gathering power and growth in England, as through all the States of civilized Europe, when the great rebellion in the time of Charles I. shook loose the constitutional ligaments and joinings of the then existing frame of the commonwealth, and a revolution began which met with various stops and impulses, but which could not stand still until a level had been attained fully commensurate with the stature of the public mind. It ran through its natural stages as the opposite forces prevailed, until, with much crime and madness on one side, and no great wisdom or virtue on the other, the revolution was brought to a most happy termination by the change which placed William III. upon the throne. From this great era England and Ireland—and every State in Europe—went on in the ordinary course of national progress, though with very unequal steps; improving in condition, and gathering new strength in trade and knowledge for a few generations, little interrupted by any wide or permanent obstacle. During the interval thus described, Ireland is mainly remarkable for that inequality which has been often observed in the course of this book, and which we shall more fully explain presently. The popular pressure which she opposed

\* Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. vi.



against the barriers of jurisdiction was but slight, compared with the force and energy of democratic resistance and popular self-assertion in England. She had, as yet, no people, and was chiefly subject to the collisions of her divided aristocracy,\* and the various action of other causes; the enforced partiality of government to English interests, and the official maladministrations which were the necessary result of such a state of things. And this statement may be taken as a summary description of the condition of the country, from the revolution of 1688 till the commencement of the American war.

At this point we arrive at another and very advanced stage in the history of European, and, still more, of British progress. The beginning of the disputes which led to the American war was another of those shocks, of which the effect was expansive, inevitable, and proportioned to the real progress which had been gained in the previous interval. The struggle in which the States of the American Union shook off the colonial yoke, was but an event which must sooner or later have occurred—but we are here only concerned with some remoter consequences. The shock of the struggle and of its event reached England, Ireland, and France; and variously affected them, according to their then existing conditions. These several impulses, ere long, became in a manner combined, or were perhaps severally modified and augmented by a mutual reaction. Both of these considerations will be of use to us. We must first observe the event with regard to Ireland.

The jealousy of commercial interests, in which the disadvantages had, of course, been felt by the weaker, operated to create a disunion between the two kingdoms. To maintain this superiority was an obligation enforced on the British government by the English people. In Ireland, a growing discontent on this score, augmented by other local discontents, was to be dealt with by the policy of government; and for this end the Irish parliament was to be managed by all those means which have been found effectual for such purposes. To extort concessions to the superiority and admissions of the interference of the English commons; to repress the outcries of commercial grievance; and to bring the income of the revenue to its highest level, were the primary duties of the vice-regal administration. And, for this, the Irish parliament was to be gained by the most profligate system of corruption and disunion. By taxation beyond the wealth of the country, a most exorbitant pension list was maintained—sinecures and offices did their ordinary work—and even national dissensions of old standing were pressed into the service, and the hands of government were strengthened by the cultivation of those rooted animosities, which have mainly depressed and retarded the true interests of the country. But there was beneath the surface a growing intelligence, and a spirit of resistance gathering. It only required the necessary occasion and the impulse to put it into motion. They came together across the waves of the Atlantic. The progress of the American war, while it communicated popular impressions, of which the effects were not very remote, placed England in a position of the most formidable emergency.

\* The word is here used in its most general sense.

A league of continental hostility appeared to menace an overwhelming addition to the exhausting struggle into which she had been betrayed, and there came an interval in which the safety of the Ocean Queen seemed compromised, when

“ The boldest held his breath  
For a time.”

But the exigency thus created was in Ireland productive of momentous consequences; in the alarm of immediate invasion the northern city of Belfast applied for protection to government—the answer of the Irish secretary was an acknowledgment of helplessness; and the effect was one of which the remotest consequences might have been clearly seen to the simplest political understanding. This effect was the arming of the Irish volunteers. This movement, which hereafter will be fully detailed, originated in no party design—it was as purely patriotic as it is reasonable to demand in any confederation of armed men. Its immediate object was soon attained; the menaced invader, whose main dependence was the ancient character of the Irish for readiness to join any enemy of England, shrunk back from the noble display of courage and patriotism which the emergency of England had thus called forth. It, however, so happened, from causes to be explained further on, that the increasing political intelligence and spirit of Ireland became at this anxious moment concentrated into a combination of patriotism, genius, and public virtue. The position of independent strength thus gained, could not fail to be quickly felt by all parties. The effect was universal, as the real character of the circumstances was imposing. It was no secret combination, such as this nation had been so often depressed and diseased by, of the basest elements:—the hopes of plunder, the phrenzy of tumultuary commotion, or the low ambition of demagogues. It was the concentration of the best elements—the substantial yeomen and the thriving burghers of the commercial north, armed by the government, and officered by the entire nobility and gentry of the country. The learned professions furnished their liberal *quota* of scholars and gentlemen—the university of Dublin, as well as the law courts, gave eclat and credit to ranks, which may well and truly be honoured with the much abused name of patriot.

This is not the place to enter minutely upon the details of this great incident in our history, or of its progress and consequences. Large bodies of the best citizens of the most civilized nation which history records are little likely to have much political wisdom; a national emergency is easily comprehended; long grievances and sore oppression require little exposition; but an army, even of patriots, is a bad council of state. The sense of power—the conviction of having done good—the consciousness of patriotic aims—imparted to forty thousand armed men an impression of political importance. They soon reached the limit which separates influence from armed dictation; their influence, it is to be admitted, was, even from the first, mainly due to their attitude of force; but this, for a time, was a tacit impression, and supported with the utmost seeming of undisciplined forbearance; they presently assumed a tone of conscious importance; they raised

their demands, and spoke as men who could not be well denied. They also outlasted the constitutional period of their existence, and became an object of apprehension to their best friends, and of justifiable suspicion to the government.

But they are here only noticed as the sign and development of a growing spirit of resistance to a pressure inconsistent with the actual condition of the country, and with that sense of independence mainly caught from England, and already transfused among the educated and commercial classes; though the contagion of their example, of the language they used, and of the bold attitude they assumed, vastly accelerated the gathering spirit of the time. A large section of the house of commons was composed of their officers—their leaders were distinguished for their respectability and influence among the lords. They were thus sanctioned, and, at the same time, with difficulty, and imperfectly restrained. The temperate firmness of Charlemont, the dexterity of administration, the liberal and fair concessions then made to Ireland, and their own oversights, gradually brought them to a fortunate end; but the effect remained. The opposition in parliament, as well as the constituency by which it was maintained, had greatly grown in numbers, concert, and power. Other influences gradually were poured into the mass of intractable elements which must accompany such a state of things—the spirit of resistance cannot be confined to the good and wise. Disaffected feelings and revolutionary tenets began to breathe throughout Ireland, as in England, and throughout Europe. Many incidents and events, here necessarily omitted, occurred, to alarm the apprehensions of the British cabinet. One, comparatively trifling, has been supposed to have had a critical and determining effect. This was the regency question, in 1789, on which occasion the Irish parliament took a high and irrespective course, which is thought afterwards to have mainly operated on the Pitt administration in the introduction of the union. The political incidents which followed this event, may be regarded as appurtenant to the history of the United Kingdom. A general statement of its most prominent social and moral consequences, must presently obtain a place in these preliminary reflections.

*Constitutional changes in England.*—Looking back to the elementary conditions stated in the commencement of this introduction, and looking on revolutions as great social convulsions which either abate certain barriers to human progress, or restore, from age to age, the balance between the growth and the due control, the enlarging and the coercive powers of a state, the proposition will be very clearly understood,—that the permanency of any system of government, in a highly improving country, must depend on the concurrent provision for change, which is to be found in its legal and constitutional polity. It is evident that, were it possible for a just system of government to throw out new provisions, and to throw off old ones so as to secure a precise adaptation concurrent with the entire alteration effected by time upon a nation, there would be far less occasion for the great revolutions which are the main events of history.

The constitution of England was no sudden growth of human invention, constructed by that shallow ingenuity which conjures up from



the floating confusion of present events, systems which the unanticipated future is to sweep away in the torrent of change. It was the slow growth from the accumulated sagacity of ages which, in England, alone, perhaps, was enabled to assert its free action upon the course of political progress. The "wisdom of our ancestors" is an old phrase which the visionary speculation of the last generation has sneered out of our language: the sober, grave, and imposing fanaticism of theory, looks with a sense of delusive superiority upon the slow and cautious judgment which is content to follow the course of time, to build upon the foundations of the past, and to lay down its lines within the compass of its real experience. In this we can see the same spirit and the same results as may be traced in all the departments of human knowledge—speculation after speculation blowing up its sparkling and evanescent bubbles along the mighty stream—while systems of un conjectured reality are growing together, the result of innumerable incidents, and workings, and intellects, all apparently tending and striving different ways. The British constitution can be traced in the History of England from remote reigns, in the well-combined, well-balanced, and, fortunately timed strivings and collisions of political elements in a moral and intellectual medium which would seem to have been tempered by Providence for the purpose of bringing forth and nurturing the growth of liberty. The same steady, resolute, and cool nature that characterized the disciplined heroism of the field of Waterloo, is even singularly conspicuous along the whole line of events, from the field of Runnemed to the crowning era of the Bill of Rights. Not by the ascendancy of that popular dictation which has latterly been asserted in random speeches, but by that transfusion of a popular sentiment of justice and liberty which is the essential spirit of the British character, however modified by local and accidental influences, or by the universal tendencies of human nature. The people of England has not been merely represented in the house of commons, it has always existed within the walls of parliament; and the spirit by which it is cemented and animated transfuses a cordial warmth even upon the throne. But we overshoot our purpose. The peculiar principle which we had here designed simply to exemplify is, indeed, best to be understood by contemplating the popular character of all our institutions.

Among the causes which have neutralized the disorganizing influence of revolution in England, is mainly to be reckoned the elasticity of its constitution. When nicely analyzed, every main portion of it will appear to contain, in itself, some provision for the uniform and regular advances of the general condition of the people. The nearly unprecedented rapidity of these advances has, indeed, been such as to render unusually evident some of the principles of this adaptation. We cannot enter upon them here; they cannot be discussed without some digression from our main purpose; they may, however, be briefly exemplified in the dormant efficacy of a considerable portion of the executive power of the state,—much of which will, on examination, be observed to be contingently provisional; and, hence, to be dependent for its activity on the necessity for which it is provided. The mere consideration that nearly the entire of our legal processes

must take their beginning, not from the despotic discretion of the state, but from private will, may enable the reader to follow out the principle to a great extent. Thus it is, that the law rules, and rules in unison with the exigencies of the time. Thus, laws are wisely measured; and thus they die away by processes merely constitutional. In stating this example—for it is but one of many similar considerations—it is necessary to add, that such principles are too essential not to be in different degrees universal. The principles of law are the principles of society, and must be found variously combined and modified in all its forms. Nor is it necessary to suppose them understood by either the makers or the dispensers of law—the contrary is, indeed, a fact too notorious. The adaptation of these principles to the wants of mankind is suggested by visible exigencies, and is, for the most part, but partial and imperfect. So far as human councils are concerned, the world is governed with little wisdom. It would be a curious, but a nice question, to show the course of causes and effects by which—in proportion as the progress of the commerce and the arts of life is peaceful and prosperous—the adaptation of constitutional principles tends more and more to the most whole and perfect development. But these are, perhaps, hazardous generalities.

It is a consequence of the peculiar condition thus described, that we cannot in the summary manner which some of our readers may expect, state the more nice and gradual steps of the changes which the same public events have effected in England. In Ireland, and to a great extent in other nations, the main transitions have been summarily produced by the immediate operation of some visible coercion. In England they have grown as from the powers of nature; and those leading events which appear in other countries in the form of causes, as plainly appear there as effects. In other countries, the history of these constitutional changes is to be written in that of their main revolutionary struggles. In England mighty struggles have come and rolled away like those tempests which rock our walls and terrify the night, and in the morning are past, leaving no trace on the calm and cheerful prospect.

The political history of England, when closely analyzed, is the history of her factions, parties, and administrations,—a vast, diversified, and unexhausted field, rich in all the possible examples of human nature, whether in its aggregate or individual workings.

We shall next state at greater length than would be quite convenient in the course of any of the succeeding memoirs, our view of some great party changes which were to have a momentous influence in the events of our own time, though they are, in principle, to be traced as the growth of that interval which is to be comprised in this immediate division of our work.

*General party changes.*—In some one of the memoirs, in the previous division of this work, we offered some explanation of the remarkable change of position and opinions, which many writers have noticed, as having taken place in the two main parties commonly known as whig and tory. We there endeavoured to explain how, by the natural progress of opinions subject to the influence of events, these two great parties gradually have changed ground without any real change of principle or character. The fleeting succession of atoms of which



parties are composed would, in the natural cycles of action and reaction, have replaced each other with affections and opinions which revolve in no very wide circle; like the movements of the solar system, their retrogressions and stations are but apparent, and each has, in fact, been moving onward in the course of nature. We have next to notice the far more important influences which have remarkably modified and complicated this simple movement. Our problem of moral forces and agencies is affected by perturbations far less simple than those of the physical world. It is generally known that the revolution of France was accompanied by a vast storm of opinions and theories, such as might well be expected to arise from human speculation in a wild attempt to usurp the functions of time and human nature, and to break up and reorganize the social state. The restraints of society cannot be thoroughly unloosed without first throwing aside the moral and spiritual checks of religion. Philosophy, in its madness, invested itself with an imaginary omniscience, and, as a natural consequence, brought forth atheism in the most monstrous forms, but yet, speciously dressed up in all the varied attractions which licentiousness possesses for the inferior classes of mankind, or which theories, systems, and sentiments, ever have for the heated and visionary; it is also well known how these theories were diffused among the surrounding nations; how they were caught up by artful agitators to inflame the populace, and by turbulent fanatics with the mad enthusiasm of opinion—how also the spread of disaffection and infidelity, thus caused throughout the nations, was seized upon by persons of a far different stamp, the keen and specious infidels of the school of Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire, as weapons of political warfare. And more tremendously effective weapons were never forged in the cavern of discord. The ravings of blasphemy and sedition, and the wild hallucinations of a most baseless and unsubstantial philosophy soon passed away, as such follies and dreams must pass from a country like England. But the subtle mischief has its root in human nature; and infidelity, the *inborn taint*, became developed, diffused, and vitally interwoven with radicalism.

For the quick spread and dissemination of this contagion none of the great parties was to be blamed. It spread among the vulgar, and was scattered by the basest tongues and pens. But the *effect* which it produced fell in well with the policy of the whigs: a virtuous and, in the main, not unwise policy, till it became thus almost unconsciously affected with this element of division and disease. The writings of this party now became plainly tinged with an infidel tone, and all the resources of the press, reviews, pamphlets, and even public institutions, were broadly stamped with its character. The cautious and statesmanlike speech could be traced to its purpose by the more broad and daring statement of the periodical essay. The legislative policy, maintained by wise and not unjust arguments, could be referred without much difficulty to the known private views of the proposer. The whigs had ever been ready on all occasions to join in every attack upon the church, but their motives had formerly been referrible to their general tenets of religion. Now, however, there began to pervade all such attacks a tone of a very different kind—a language which contained the clearest implication of the untruth of all religion. Arguments in



behalf of toleration, and liberty of conscience, were so selected, and so expressed, as to make these important blessings of freedom depend on the principle, that all religions were equally true or false, and that the legislator should in no way be actuated by any sense of religious obligation.

But our business here with this unfortunate change is simply to point out its remarkable effect on the state of parties. An influence of a high order was thus infused into the mass of party strivings. The sense of religion, not confined to party, became thus a decomposing element in the combination of the liberalist parties. The anti-religious movement had become too perceptibly defined to be mistaken, and conscience could not any longer continue secure in connivance.

Concurrently with the influential cause thus stated, there were others far more on the surface, which operated to a considerable extent. There was that indefinite working of opinion attendant on every great public question, by which, in the course of time, a balance between contending arguments is produced in numerous minds. A greater number still were maintained in a middle position, by a sense of interests, while their connexions or religious views might have weighed in the opposite scale.\* Many whigs began to perceive the interminable prospect of an ascending series of demands on the side of the extreme party at their back, while numerous tories, emancipated gradually from the conventional prejudices of an old party, became anxious to arrest encroachment and complaint, on fair grounds of constitutional equality.

Among the whole of this large and variously affected cloud of persuasions, a gradual sense began to arise of the great truth of a broad and comprehensive movement, wholly independent of the objects or interests of classes. It began to be felt that many ancient strongholds were dissolving, and that time was fast shifting the great questions of the last century. It began to be seen, by those who could see, that interests once small and separate had been enlarged—that the most insignificant party connected with the movement was the part of a mighty and irresistible whole, that could no more be turned back than the tide. Some few recollected that there was a higher overruling power, and that right and truth must prevail.

A new party sprung up—mainly, we believe, from the ranks of the whigs, and grew up by slow degrees. This new party existed without a name, or a principle of concentration, simply in its materials—partly lingering among the whigs, and partly seceding to the tories, and spreading on every side, unforeseen and silent, while it appropriated the common sense of the nation. It was, indeed, rather a constituent portion of the public mind than a party; but we use this term for conciseness. To make the notion familiar, most persons will recollect the common boast of being called a “tory among the whigs, and a whig among the tories”—persons who were zealous for catholic emancipation and

\* It would not, consistently with our sketching method, be easy to give examples. On the subject of interested motives, there are some highly curious and instructive. Many protestant country gentlemen evinced a very earnest desire to rid themselves of tithes, until it began to appear that the same arguments which were advanced against the tithes, soon became as efficacious and as convincing when objected to rents.

fierce against radical reform. Thus, the elements of a great future party continued to gather numbers and force, unmarked by any name, and, for a long time quite unrecognised by those who were active in the conflicts of party—numbers of them being attached to either, and numbers floating between, without influence, or recognised leaders, or combining principles; and, if at all active in the politics of the time, rather governed by the common movements and leaders, or by the main connexions of the political section to which they might happen to be attached. But when there thus exists a strong infusion of feelings and convictions, adapted in their nature to influence public bodies, and substantially founded in reason and truth, however insignificant they may seem to the crowd who move but at their leaders' beck, or by the guidance of party maxims and prejudices—they will gradually combine with public feeling, and alter the direction of every party. And thus it was that a great middle party has grown up between the two great opposites, absorbing slowly the better portions of both, and, at a future period, to take the place of both, for the purpose of governing and accomplishing the great movement of the following period—when they were to be seen, as it were, standing out from the ranks of whig and tory, to repress, on one hand, the fanaticism of pure liberalism, that would dissolve the social state; and, on the other, to constrain the fierce prejudices that would repress the tide of time, and bind the future to the limits of ancient darkness. But we are passing our bounds; our present business is with the early commencements and influences, of which these are among the many consequences.

*Religions.*—Among the moving causes adverted to in the foregoing section, none exerted the efficacious power of religion. We do not here mean, however, the direct contentions of hostile sects or churches—though these had, unquestionably, their share in aggravating the general effects, and, to a great extent, served to furnish the occasion and pretext for the spirit of infidelity which characterized the whole movement of the age, and marked with a family likeness its origin in the French revolution.

The spread of infidel principle cast a strong influence over the Church of England. It was soon felt, or imagined to be necessary, by its teachers, to lower the tone of the pulpit to the rationalizing spirit of the age. The pure and plainly-asserted doctrines of the New Testament, of the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies, were filtered down in a mere system of prudential ethics:—a process the more easy, as other previous influences had long, in a lesser degree, had similar tendencies. To those who would thoroughly comprehend the extreme facility of the transition here spoken of, a few observations may be parenthetically made. We shall be as concise as possible.

If a system were to be devised to remedy the ills of life, to correct the vices of individuals, and the imperfections of society, it would be impossible to conceive so consummate a system of antagonistic influences and provisions as the entire complex of doctrines and morals contained in the whole comprehension of christianity, as it is plainly and simply presented by its Author and first teachers. But for this very reason, that it was, in fact, devised as a remedial system, and, consequently,

one of thorough opposition to the predominating tendencies of human nature—it seems to be a most obvious inference, that there should be in the bosom of society a perpetual struggle against it. Nor is it difficult to perceive that there must be a perpetual current of tendencies, never long—if at any time—interrupted, to lower its tone and to fine away its requisitions. And such will ever be found a well indicated fact. When it becomes less observable in the best framed states of society, it will be still traceable in the conduct and conversation of individuals—at one time deriving a spurious sanction from opposition to the workings of fanaticism; at another, from that shallow and flippant wisdom which is best described as “foolishness with God.” Sometimes softening down one tenet and sometimes another, but always in a spirit of adaptation to the wisdom of the world; but, most of all, adopting that peculiar compromise which could not have a moment’s existence in any other concern—the formal admission, and practical suppression of the acknowledged truth. Such was the actual conduct of the Church of England during the time to which this introduction belongs. On the inconsistency no remarks need be made—we are concerned in a great effect. The gospel, treated as if it were a mere legal fiction, invented for the purposes of state, obtained on the public mind precisely the place and practical authority of such a fiction. To deny it was indecorous—to attend to its forms, decent—to maintain its *peculiar* and characteristic doctrines, had some contemptuous name. Preachers delivered dissertations borrowed from Epictetus or Tully—the pulpit re-echoed of Academus and the grove, the beauty of virtue, and the prudence of temperance and honesty, and truth was qualified with the language of natural religion (as it is called), and the whole variegated mass concluded with a formal allusion to the gospel, wisely tempered to give no offence to the most fastidious nerves. But we come back to our text.

From a condition of society in which infidel professions largely blended with a state of religion virtually nothing different—not only arose the singular and monstrous phenomenon of a policy, which with one and the same breath acknowledged the church and the gospel, and asserted, in direct contradiction to it, the heathen maxim, that all religions and all churches were the same, and that religious truth was a matter of indifference; that the duties of public men released them, *pro tempore*, from all allegiance to God; that though they should be christians on Sunday, and in church, they might be infidel in council, and in the business of the office or senate. But religion lost its hold—the church languished, lowered its sacred calling, and became degraded in the eye of the community. Vast numbers seceded in search of spiritual light, and the language of the Scriptures was to be only heard by departing from the church which has made the most complete and comprehensive provisions for the diffusion of their purest light. Such was the state of religion in England—the effect, and, by reaction, the cause, of the diffusion of revolutionary tenets.\*

\* This is true in two very important senses—on neither of which can we now afford to be expansive. It is, in the first place, evident that, in a constitution involving christianity as an elementary principle, infidel doctrines must be, in the most direct sense, revolutionary. But in a sense less immediate, it is also appa-



It was from Ireland that an important, and, we trust, most influential reform, was to arise. The *insula sanctorum* was once again to take its place as a luminary of the west; and a race of christian teachers was to arise and restore her spiritual character to the Church of England. Of this the results are now acknowledged on every side—a new generation have grown up in the fear and love of God, and the light which has diffused itself through every corner of the land, is at length spreading with a rapid progress through England. Its history, however, in this stage, belongs to the present time; and we shall hereafter trace it, with minute detail, in future memoirs of some of those illustrious men who were, under God's blessing, the worthy instruments of a holy cause, and have gone to rest from their labours. We shall also have to trace the steps by which toleration, little consistent with fanaticism, on the one hand—or with rigid formalism, the parent of prejudices, on the other, has at last grown out of the spirit of genuine christianity, which, while it is least of all indifferent about the truth, is also least desirous to be sustained by any species of human tyranny.

*Literature, Arts, &c.*—Were we engaged in a treatise of an elementary or purely scientific nature, on civilization and the development of those causes by which society has advanced from the earliest times to the present, we should have commenced with those considerations with which, following the common order of historical writings, we are now to conclude. Though in the early origin of social order, it is easy to perceive that the first element is to be sought in the history of religion and law—which must have been identical in their source and primary development—and though commerce offers the next efficient agency in the advancement of social institutions, yet, when we take a starting-point within the scope of modern history, and endeavour to trace the action of ulterior causes, in expanding and giving diffusiveness and effect to the more finished structure of modern civilization, there can be little doubt that the moral and intellectual forces acting on society, must precede the agency of merely political or merely commercial considerations, embodying in themselves all that still continues to be efficient of prior agencies and social causes.

In the earlier states of civilized society, literature cannot be considered as operating to any considerable extent. It is mainly confined to a narrow, and that not effective, class of persons. The first teachers among the heathen nations—the grammarians and philosophers—were as scattered and separated lights, which shed their pale and ineffective rays in feeble circles—the porch, the academy, or the grove—and glimmered through the surrounding darkness on a few chosen heads. That their teaching produced some influence on their own times, we do not mean to question: it was not that precisely of which we speak; their speculations, so far as they reached, refined and polished the educated,—but they were not knowledge; they had little foundation in reality, and led to nothing. It is also to be admitted, that the philosophy of the ancients had an enormous effect on the early

rent that the mere antipathy to so influential an element of civil power and moral influence as a national religion, should have the effect of exciting a powerful sentiment of antipathy to a state of things involving such a power.

ages of modern Europe; but it was still not what we contend for, but the opposite—a *retarding power*. The religion and the philosophy of the ancients, constituting, as they did, the learning of barbarous ages, corrupted religion, and retarded the advance of reason,—the two great primary elements of improvement.

On the continental nations of modern Europe, these adverse influences operated to their full extent, and in their least mitigated form, until the Reformation first began to break the bonds of spiritual despotism. In England it was otherwise. The sturdy national spirit and fortunate isolation of the land-queen, had never, in the darkest period, wholly submitted to the moral and intellectual prostration of Europe. Whatever instituted forms of despotism could effect, there were tendencies generated, and a spirit fostered, which, under the influence of events, and the operation of external causes, placed England foremost in the moral and intellectual, as well as in the political progress of Europe,—the real field on which the great battle of civil and religious, as well as religious and philosophical liberty, was contested and carried to its conclusion. The elements to which these great blessings are to be traced can be found in every chapter of English history alone, in some pure and native form. Of this, so far as we are here concerned, the best evidences are to be found in the vigorous and healthful tone which, from an early period, will be easily traced in our literature, compared with that of France and Germany, our main competitors in progress.

The wonderful genius of Italy, shooting in every direction in bright and palmy grace and fertility, was forcibly suppressed and kept down by the despotism of an irresistible power; and minds which might have changed the face of Europe, were quenched in dungeons, and fettered by edicts. Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo, awakened lights which were to burn in the hands of Newton. Ariosto and Tasso, the bards of ancient Italy, left their spirit to Milton. Shakspeare was the native spirit of the land,—not less manifested in his art, or in the force of his genius, than in his very materials—the rough and racy variety of humours and characters, nowhere to be found but in the people from which his moral colouring and features are drawn; so much so, indeed, that to those who love to speculate upon the national history of change and revolution, we would recommend the study of this immortal poet and his contemporaries, compared with those of other civilized nations in the same period. From the time of Shakspeare, (to go no further back,) it is easy to trace in the British poets and moral writers of each succeeding generation, a regular and steady march of mind, fully adequate to explain the leading character of our political progress, and without which the explanations of writers on the subject are incomplete. The clash of sects and factions, of orders and civil powers—so well described, and traced by some modern political writers to their ultimate results—are but secondary to the great moving regulations and gradually stabilitating power to be discerned in the successive course of our literature. Those poems, and those moral essays, and that general tone of thought, which has been criticised mainly with exclusive reference to literature, is the striking, visible, and, indeed, only indication that is to be seen of the great moving element of all our



progressive changes. In England alone can be seen the gradual development of an orderly and genuine humanity. We have used the word in the sense in which it has been used by M. Guizot, in his eloquent and truly philosophical lectures on civilization. The reader of that excellent work will perceive, that in this we have presumed to controvert his preference, in this respect, in favour of his own country. While he makes admissions in favour of the legal and constitutional pre-eminence of England, he assigns to France a pre-eminence which, we must say, is not quite consistent with the rest of his theory: we must, however, state, that our objection is not so much to his facts, as to the estimate which he seems to have formed of them. His language is the following:—"A different development from that of social life has been brilliantly manifested by them (the French)—the development of the individual and mental existence—the development of man himself—of his faculties, sentiments, and ideas," &c. We do not continue M. Guizot's splendid description, because we do not mean to controvert its direct purport. The brilliant development of the individual tendencies towards letters, sciences, and arts—which M. Guizot, we think, erroneously considers as the "progress of humanity"—we are inclined to suspect, that on a rigid and scientific analysis, for which we have neither space nor time, it would be discovered to be a serious error, which thus divorces "progress of society" from the "progress of humanity." We can here, in opposition, only offer the statement by which we have introduced this stricture. We consider the progress of humanity far more evidenced in the moral elements of minds like those of Johnson, Edmund Burke, Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, Scott, and his immediate circle, than in the visionary brilliancy and the keen-edged pleasantries of the philosopher and wit of the anti-revolutionary schools in France. The difference is just that between the perfection of the higher and the vivacity of certain inferior faculties. The development of the British mind was pre-eminently *moral*, in the better or colloquial sense of the word: the cultivation of truth, justice, and the domestic affections, on the one true and (almost) exclusively British foundation—that of a pure and unadulterated christianity. The main distinction in favour of France is one highly calculated to mislead a Frenchman, even though a philosopher of a very high order. The progress of *manners* is the eminent distinction of France—*apparent humanity*. It would not, indeed—but that we are reluctant to digress so far—be very difficult to prove that a high-wrought system of manners is more nearly connected with the defects, than with the perfections of humanity. It could be proved from obvious moral considerations, and it could be exemplified in the whole social history of civilized nations. For the first of these considerations, we should find it easy to trace out the immediate connexion between the moral defects of social intercourse, and those etiquettes, forms, and small conventions, which are essential for their counteraction. For the second we should have, in confirmation, to show, that as we recede from the present day, the manners of our ancestors will be found more complex, elaborate, and highly wrought, and also to hold a more important place in the preservation and government of social intercourse. The celebrated anecdote of king Louis and the earl of Stair will occur to many of our readers, and is no bad



illustration of the difference which exists between the manners which arise out of high moral cultivation, and those which supply the want. There have been states of society in which every law of social order would have been wholly disregarded, but for the safety-valves of etiquette—the humanity which lay within the province of the dancing-masters and masters of ceremonies, and all the little barriers of punctilio. For such examples we should, of course, travel back some generations; but our immediate application requires us only to add, that a lively people, superfluously endowed with animal vivacity, must, even by nature, and therefore at all times, stand to a greater extent in need of a conventional system of the minor moralities—the refinements of flattery—the small niceties of sentiment which supply the place of the feelings they seem to express.

There is, it is true, another set of facts, from which M. Guizot's representation is more professedly derived; we mean the singular diffusion of literature among the French people. In France, every man is *un artiste*, "wit, poet, statesman, fiddler and buffoon." Of this multifarious mediocrity, much talent must needs be brought forth; there must be also a vast incentive to individual efforts, where every one feels that the eyes and ears of all France are upon him. But we most directly and uncompromisingly deny the truth of the implied comparison in M. Guizot's language, which assigns any superiority to any department of French literature over that of England; to which, in every department, and with the most even and uninterrupted uniformity, a vast superiority must be assigned in every intellectual attribute of the higher order, and in every successive period. The glory of French literature is the consummation of style,—a distinction to be traced to the same causes as that which has rendered them the most agréable and graceful people on earth. M. Guizot could not fail to be complimentary to France: but the candour which distinguishes his understanding will not be deliberately unjust to the nation to which France must look for the first and brightest pages of every branch of her literature—her distinguished mathematics—her moral and metaphysical science—her poetry and fiction, now only in their infancy. But this point will derive farther illustration from the observations which we shall presently have to offer upon the progress of literature; we must therefore break off from a digression into which we have been tempted. It is not in these things that the true development of humanity consists; but in the unencumbered and clear enlargement of the inseparable elements of the reason and affections. It is in the rectification of these that the higher attributes of humanity are to be sought. A sound-minded and intelligent British curate has more true wisdom, and a clearer insight into the nature and destinies of man, the objects and happiness of life, and the ends and prospects of society, than Voltaire, Jean Jacques, and the whole concentrated intellect of the *Encyclopédie*. The mind of Burke would well outweigh the philosophy of the French revolution. It is in England that the history of the mind and destinies of man must be traced, from the Reformation to the present moment. There is a necessary and inseparable connexion between religion and virtue—between virtue and sound reason—and between both of these and all social progress. They are

elements which cannot be disjoined, and in no place can these be so reasonably sought as in the bosom of that nation which has been so long the refuge of the vital and purifying element of the gospel.

Among the most evident and universally intelligible evidences of the unwarped, undistempred, and true growth of the mind of the English nation, (and in this we include the whole aristocracy, gentry, and educated classes in the three kingdoms,) may be adduced both the positive indications of the pure, sound, and christian system of morals which pervade all our writers of every class—moralists, poets, metaphysical writers; so that, even among our infidel writers, some of their power is derived from the adoption of the gospel ethics, and the negative indication consisting in the absence of the unprincipled and vague system of philosophy and morals, which has so abounded in the continental schools. The secret of our constitutional stability, and of our comparatively unimpeded progress, may be found in the striking truth, that the ethics of the New Testament have been so diffused into the British mind, as unconsciously to govern and characterize the entire tissue of life and reason. In all places, and under the most corrupted forms, something of divine truth will be found in those who profess to teach the christian religion. A sublime moral, at least, may be found in Massillon, Bourdaloue, &c.; but it is not to our preachers and churchmen that we refer, but to the entire tone and spirit of our profane literature, taken altogether as a body of opinion and thought. Throughout the tissue, truth, justice, and rectified affections, appear in the simplest form, unencumbered by theories and the uncertainty of speculation—rather deriving influence from, than pretending to discover that body of sentiment and opinion which has long been the common sentiment of the British islands. And thus it is that the literature of England—the *result* of its religion—has been a main element in the development of the most advanced state of humanity yet developed. To trace the operation of the spiritual principle in the actual condition of society, is perhaps impossible—certainly not within our present compass. On the mass it is always a latent, and not immediate operation. The “broad way and the green” can, in no state of human society, present more than its reflected light; but in this lies the agency in which we are here concerned. It is not the gospel, as the hope of the follower of Christ that we speak of, but its secondary influences. It supplies the standard of virtue; it affords high examples and unerring criterions, not otherwise known or to be known; it largely governs habits through the medium of early discipline; it keeps alive (however vaguely) hopes, fears, and conscientious motives and scruples, almost universally; and it scatters in every quarter bright and influential patterns of christian life. But all this is not enough for the purpose of our statement; as such, and looking to no further end, the corruption of humanity is too overpowering to the observation, to admit of the satisfactory application of such a view as test or comparison. Sweeping evasions are too easy. Human conduct is everywhere characterized by similar infirmities, beset by similar temptations, and concealed by the same disguises. The human heart, “deceitful above all things,” moves everywhere in its cloud of pretences, and there is no human aim that cannot be accommodated with

the specious garb of some nominal virtue. It is the *theory* of virtue that we have here to look to; for in this alone is to be found the *average* amount and limits of attainment. Now, it is to the whole mass of the literature of a country that such a test should be applied. Ethical works only contain the fruits of individual speculation; but literature is, for the most part, shaped to the taste of the nation, and speaks best what that taste is. Such is the point of comparison to which we would direct the reader's notice, and such also is the principle of its application. Even the moral obscurantism attendant on the troubled interval between Charles I. and the Revolution, brought forth the mind of Milton, in whose intellectual character, when due deductions are made for pure genius, may be discerned the pure and severe spiritual and moral elevation which lay involved within those turbid elements. The writers of queen Anne's time, various as are their critical merits, present a striking moral front. Temple, Steele, and Addison, the most popular of essayists, ascertain both the moral tendencies of the time, and the essential spirit from which it proceeded. The torch was delivered to Johnson, and to the wits and orators of his day—the entrance of our present division—all writers of one ethical school; for by no other could they have spoken the mind of the British people. Of these men, some were christian by character and profession—all by taste. Such is the first sense in which we consider it essential to regard our literature, in viewing it as a criterion of the true element of progress in England. Christian, in the general sense which we have endeavoured to explain, it is, at the same time, one of the great general indications of progress and change.

Before we enter on a more general view of the same class of indications, we must guard against being supposed to pay too exclusive a regard to those which are merely intellectual. We assent at once to the proposition, that a nation may arrive at a very high degree of constitutional strength—of wealth and foreign preponderance, without a proportional advance in *literature*. There should be some important deductions to make, but we shall not enter on the question; it has no immediate application. In England, all the departments of literature rose by a uniform progress to their very highest state; and we proceed here on the principle that the indication thus afforded is the least liable to deception.

In the opening of our period, the literature of England was as a blaze of light. Though considerably below the point (perhaps the maximum) which it attained in the commencement of the present century, it had reached a height unprecedented in the history of modern Europe. To understand this according to our true intent, it must, however, be observed, that we are not speaking of the production of works of great genius—a consideration not in any way here involved—but simply of the general condition of literature, as estimated from its average results. The wide-spread taste—the numerous scholars, poets, and orators—the rising school of art—then was the triumph of oratory and of historians unrivalled in modern or ancient nations. Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Fox, Pitt, Burke, Pope, Johnson, Goldsmith—the constellated light of the Turk's Head—itsself a splendid development from Will's coffee-house. At this period, it may



well be doubted whether the capacities of the human intellect had not reached their highest intellectual point. The estimate by which such a question could best be decided, would be complicated with many difficulties, and demand a wide range of comparisons. The process would be one by which the mere diffusion of knowledge, the mere increase of results—with also the vast additions which have been made to the common stock of human ideas—should be distinguished from the consideration in question,—the accomplishment of man's intellectual constitution. To a great extent, indeed, these questions would appear identified so closely as to make the distinction seem a vain refinement; but our present scope requires no notice of these difficulties. The genius of individuals is not to be measured by the entire intellectual comprehension of the present age; with the increase of knowledge the division of labour is improved, and to some extent it is true, that what the public mind gains, the individual loses in scope. It may be well doubted whether, in the entire range of the most eminent, instructed, and refined society of the present moment, the circle at Sir Joshua Reynolds' table could be reproduced—no one will, on consideration, say that it could be excelled. The entire time since his death has not brought forth the intellectual peer of Burke. The peculiar nerve, promptness, the discursive reach and vigour of Johnson has no rival. If this estimate, which we are content to assert—because we do not think it will be denied—be correct, one further consideration will be enough. If we are to estimate the development of humanity by such considerations, no nation has ever yet risen to the same proud level of attainment. They who would pay so untenable an honour to France, have either looked very superficially on the state of that great and splendid people, or they have judged by a scale of humanity which we do not understand, and cannot here investigate. Manners, and the smaller moralities of common conversation, we have conceded; wit, grace, both in conversation and writing, and all that contributes to smoothen the collisions and refine the common concourse of the world, from the monarch's court to the polite conversation of the stalls and streets, is the undisputed pre-eminence of *la belle nation*. These are, to a great extent, the elements of that illusory humanity which has imposed on French statisticians. But looking to the actual amount of evidence in favour of their comparative preference, it will, in the first careful glance, appear, that it must include a vast mist of false, unregulated, and vague philosophizings on false data, and on no data, eminently characteristic of undisciplined intellect. The philosophical invention of the French was profuse and brilliant, because it was repressed by no caution, and not confined by any regard to realities; while that of England was the slow but sturdy growth of successive confirmations—the patient development of experience. The theories of the revolutionary philosophers—full as they are of striking eloquence, of clever and just thoughts, and of *incidental* wisdom, founded on no true facts, and assuming a wide scope of licentious fallacy—have struck no root in the intellect even of France. With little exception,\* they have passed into oblivion, having contributed as little

\* The exception, indeed, is unnecessary; the economists are not to be confounded with the political projectors of the revolution.

to the political wisdom of the succeeding generation, as the crimes and horrors to which they gave their transient share of impulse, advanced their prosperity and power. When this discordant crowd, and all their brilliant frost-work of opinion, system, and mere eloquence, is reduced to its truth, and to its real share in the advancement of humanity, it will be easy to do critical justice. Nearly the whole of the great and various foundations of modern science might be also excluded, for very opposite reasons, from the same estimate. They fall to a large extent under the class of external results. So far as these remarks apply, the consideration is confined to the moral and social expansion of the public mind; as the precise point for which we have contended, is not that our national development has been larger or more brilliant, but more in strict conformity with truth, reality, the nature of man, and the design of his Maker.

In looking to those external results of human reason—that is to say, the advancement of the arts and sciences—we do not mean to pursue the comparison further than to observe that it would terminate equally in favour of England. To England the history of modern science must trace its beginnings, and it is in these that the higher elements of human reason will be mainly traced: they more surely imply patience, forbearance, comprehension, judgment, and a just election among the thousand ways of error. The rest are more common and inferior powers. We should be sorry, indeed, to be thought to disparage the illustrious school which has consummated the astronomy of Newton. But the progress of humanity and the advance of discovery are not simply convertible terms. There is, to be sure, a connexion, but it is one not of principles but results; every incident of the human state in some way may affect the whole complex of humanity. If any of our readers should be led to follow out a subject which we must here drop, there is a suggestion which he will find of some use. The first error to which the comparison of different departments of intellectual effort is liable, is the confusion of the *mere degree* of any talent with its elevation in the scale of excellence. Another—a similar error would be between the importance of *results* and the *powers* by which they were attained.

The more appropriate consideration of the intellectual and social advance of England during the period on which we are about to enter, rejects all such investigations. We could not pass without comment an authoritative statement, which, to some extent, involves the justice of our general view of the moral and social character of this period. The reign of George III. was the development of the moral and intellectual instrumentalities, from which the vast expansion of all the elements of social progress, which characterize the present generation, have their source and origin. The full discussion of these would be desirable, and we should enter diffusely upon the varied branches of consideration thus distinguishable, were it not that there is nothing to our purpose that it will not become desirable again to bring under notice in the course of the ensuing memoirs. And it is for this reason that we here confine our discussion to the most general considerations affecting the period. The great events which seem to have given their

stamp to the age—enormous and vast as their influence has been—have, perhaps, more than can be easily calculated, been secondary to other far less perceptible agencies, of which they are in reality the effects. Of these, as we have endeavoured to show, the best measure is to be found in the state of literature and the arts, the only certain records of an age. There was, in the interval of time under our special notice, a vast and apparently sudden growth of intellectual activity, both in England and France, though subject to different laws of action, and working in different directions. As the one was unrestricted, and in its rude overflow carried away the fixed barriers of human progress, and led to no *direct* result; the other advanced under the strictest control of those elementary and essential social laws, by which alone, in any known instance, national progress has been attained; and the largest portion of individual freedom, and popular privilege, which ever yet have been combined, has been the eventual result. We are to look for the elements of our moral state, as a people, in the family and court of George III., and in the still increasing prevalence of our christian teaching in the press and pulpit; our rational sense of constitutional freedom in the long series of our able constitutional judges and lawyers, as well as in the genius of public men, whose well-known writings have given a tone to political sentiment—Locke, Somers, Burke, Mackintosh—and the constellation of which they are the eminent stars. Even our arts and wonderful attainments in the practical applications of natural philosophy to social ends—though they appear peculiarly as the offspring of the present—though we seem to have made a sudden ascent beyond the remotest calculation of our fathers—it is yet clearly traceable to the broad foundation which was their undoubted work. Let us pause to contemplate this fact; for its consideration is instructive.

In later times, from the commencement of the present century, the vital fire of social existence, knowledge, having long progressed slowly and interruptedly through numerous stages of advance and retardation, appears to have been exhibited to an intensity of light beyond the conception of our ancestors. The furnace has gained a white heat—and new and marvellous gleams and irradiations are ascending on every side, and changing the whole aspect of the social state. Old times and old thoughts are hourly losing themselves in the blaze. Either to conjecture the probabilities of discovery, or to set limits to its advances, would be hazardous and daring; and still more venturous to pretend to trace the vast and illimitable scope of results. England already concentrates into a city; and, looking to its tendencies, Europe approaches toward the forms of a vast democracy. We already look as from a lofty eminence on the times distinguished for illustrious men. But if any one who is competent to the task—and it does not involve more than a certain general amount of scientific information—will follow out to their origin the varied inventions and discoveries which have changed the entire condition of the British people—the steam-boat and the railway, and the wide range of resource for public convenience and utility—while he will unhesitatingly confess the yet unmeasured vastness of their importance and of their effects, he will see



that they are by no means the result of any commensurate degree of intellectual power: and following on in the same path, he will soon ascertain that they are best described as results of long discovery, expanded into life by the development of the external form of society itself: not the genius, but the wealth; not the compass, but the direction of knowledge. The point to be observed is this: there must be first attained a certain state of social expansion, to afford scope for numerous applications of invention. The demands of luxurious affluence, or of the most expansive commerce, and the application of that wealth which is their cause and effect, are the essential conditions for the development of the refined and expensive improvements of modern skill. The structure of a large two-masted vessel would be beyond the wants and means of the pastoral state,—the costly machinery of the steamer and the railway, the augmented powers of all the implements of production, demand the resources and supply the wants of a civilized nation. Until a certain amount of means and demands had been called into existence, the experiment which absorbed millions of capital could not be made, though the conception lay on the surface, an unproductive and not very profound speculation, to be called ingenious by the informed, and visionary by all beside. A moment, however, arrives, in which a certain ascertainable increase of demand becomes visible to the intelligent eye of commerce—an enlarged scope for investment calls forth at once both the money and the contrivance.

It is in the acceptance of these remarks that we refer all the great distinctions of modern art and improvement to the far more exuberant and far-reaching genius of previous generations. The day of the Pitts, Fox, Sheridan, Wilberforce, Johnson, and Burke, in which there was a mighty fermentation of the human genius, and an illumination in every direction, shone in its meridian, while great national prosperity was at the same time calling into existence, and fostering a large accession of numerical increase to the middle orders, who properly constitute the people. From such a state of intellectual power, and such a condition of the people, grew the peculiar splendours and substantial attainments of our own time, in literature and art, as well as in the former respects. The demand for the luxuries of literature, as well as for its more solid acquirements, was largely increased—lighter publications, as well as more various grades of excellence, found a fast-increasing market—the periodical, which was an augmentation of the power of the pamphlet—something analogous to the power-loom—was adopted, and added the very lightest species of literature, till then conceived, to the ancient purposes of popular publication. The public journal, in like manner, expanded both in scope and talent. The growing demand for political information eventuated in the publication of the debates. Keener interest and increased impulse were given to these processes by the revolutionary excitements which we have described in the beginning of this sketch; and the causes now stated, gave, of course, added power to those political impressions.

The revolutions sustained by literature, considered in itself, were not less traceable. Style had been completed; the various methods

by which the reason, fancy, and feeling, could be worked upon, had all been developed with skill: a metaphysical school of great compass had grown up; and, though of no value in its distinct results, yet such as to contribute a powerful addition to the force and resources of human reason, it increased intellectual expertness, and gave precision to moral and critical thought and language. A *reading public* rose into existence, not contemptibly furnished in any of the ordinary attainments of human cultivation. Of this the consequences were various and extensive. New and comprehensive experiments in poetry were made, by the adoption of new styles and new elements; and all the varied resources of constructive art were happily combined with the most daring efforts of conception, by the genius of Scott, in a series of fictions in prose and verse, which have stamped the literary character of his time, while their success affords the best illustration of our theory. It demanded a large market and a wide extension of the reading classes, to pay the £120,000, or more, which was the total purchase of his labour. But these considerations are only here brought forward to illustrate our sense—they belong to a future statement.

*Literature, Arts, &c., in Ireland.*—The state of Ireland, in respect to its intellectual condition, during the same interval, is not such as to demand much separate remark. We cannot immediately trace it into a connexion with the general advance of society, with the same evidence and simplicity as in our previous observations. Though analytically viewed, the same elements must always tend to the same results; yet it is only when the operation is considered in its extent, and in some measure disengaged from the action and interruption of other active social processes, that it can be followed out, without diffusive, tedious, and minute refinements. Such we are anxious to avoid.

In Ireland, the state of society, with respect to manners, morals, and education, was such as must be difficult to convey briefly to any but an Irishman whose memory can recur to a state of things now nearly, if not wholly, passed away. It was not such as may be summarily referred to any point in the scale of human progress; though, were such a comparative estimate demanded, we should, upon the whole, be rather inclined to assign a low degree of civilization. The widely desolating waste of the great rebellion, may, in a manner, be said to have swept away the moral and intellectual germination of the previous period of quiet and progressive advance; nor was there any interval of steady progress to repair the broken and suppressed processes of human advance, till the revolution of 1688 came on, introduced by a sanguinary struggle, and succeeded by the ponderous and spirit-crushing policy of government, which was the sure and hapless consequence of such a previous succession of events. The population was scanty and barbarous; nor were the gentry much above them in the higher and more important respects. Their highest accomplishments were but the refinements of barbarism or of vice. The point of honour was, generally speaking, their only characteristic and distinguishing virtue. Their tastes were gambling, drinking, and a profuse hospitality, crowned and adorned with these prominent qualifications; their main pursuits, cattle-farming and field-sports. The

most absolute potentate in any civilized state had less power than the country gentleman exercised over his tenantry: these, in many parts of the country, where the Celtic character chiefly prevailed, looked up to their lord with a veneration which even much injustice could not destroy. It was augmented in those cases where the *master* chanced to be of the old stock, and of the same church with themselves, but extended to all cases with the universality of national habit. It was, however, combined with some moral features, now, in a great measure, corrected by the effects of subsequent changes. The affection of the cottar was largely tempered by dissimulation: while his fears, hopes, and natural sense of his own interest, compelled him to flatter and crouch to his tyrant, he was not insensible to his degradation, and still less so to the insults with which kindness itself was but too often qualified. From this strange and unhappy combination of conditions was tempered a national spirit, which, having been unfairly interpreted without regard to its causes, has grown into a national reproach against the race. Much of this reproach must be also qualified by other considerations, of which the chief was the absence of instruction and example. The peasant's knowledge of right and wrong was defective in an extreme degree, and the manners and conduct of the gentry were such as to throw no light on the surrounding obscurity. The noble sentiments of truth, honesty, and honour, in the more civilized sense of the term, are not the spontaneous produce of uncultivated human nature. The state of things, thus summarily described, was variously modified by a species of intercourse which subsisted between the peasant and his master, which was much calculated to counteract those repulsive influences which we have mentioned. The gentry, and especially the younger sons of their families, entered largely into the sports of the peasantry, and excited among them feelings of good-will, and often of enthusiastic partisanship, by superior prowess and dexterity in the field,—the more so that, in the Celtic districts, the gentry belong to a more robust and muscular race than the peasantry. It was then an object of no secondary importance in the estimation of a district which lay under the shadow of a noble house, how far its members could jump or cast the half-hundred weight; and if any one was endowed with any extraordinary gift of agility or strength, it was enough to ensure universal reverence. Such instances were talked of with enthusiasm in the traditions of the third or fourth generation. The fame of *Rory More*, one of the O'Connors of the county of Roscommon, is yet flourishing in his native county; and, in our younger days, we can recollect the almost Homeric style in which old men, then living in our own immediate district of that county, used to speak of the heroic recollections of their youth, and the degeneracy of the existing time.

The gentry, in like manner, in their own peculiar customs, were largely associated with a clan-like following of their tenantry and cottars; and this gave something of a primitive character to the feuds and animosities which prevailed among the principal families in most of the counties of Ireland. Of this description were the sanguinary quarrels between the Brownes and Fitzgeralds of the west, and numerous others whom we could name. The despotic squire, no longer in-



vested by lawful right with the privileges of a chieftain, to some extent retained them by influence, and by the tenure of popular prejudice, and was tempted to exercise them on a scale too narrow to come distinctly within the notice of a lax administration, mostly exercised in a spirit of connivance. The exercise and the redress of private wrong were frequently pursued by measures equally violent and illegal, and it was no uncommon incident to see gentlemen invade each other's houses at the head of a tumultuary force.

This state of society, more barbarous than the primitive clanship from which it had degenerated, was also curiously characterized by a spirit of aristocratic pride, in which even the peasantry participated, after a peculiar manner,—the lowliest cottar seeming to feel himself exalted in the house of the great family which his father and grandfather had followed. The “*rale sort*” was an emphatic phrase to express the distinction due to a gentleman of ancient and honourable descent; and the utmost contempt which the peasant's heart could feel, or tongue express, was his scorn for the upstart gentility of low degree. This spirit may, in part, be resolved into the love of grandeur and majesty which has often been attributed to the Irish, but there is here a more distinct and intelligible reason,—the entire absence of the commercial spirit, with its consequences. There was no class of wealthy traders to offer an independent front against the feeling here described, and to present a different standard of popular estimation. There was no degree between the peasant and the aristocratic gentleman, unless that which was held by the tenure of those low accommodating vices and meannesses which could secure the confidence and favour of the lord, or by some small official elevation, of which arrogance and oppression were the most important distinctions. Thus arose an impression of dislike and scorn among the people, for all the pretensions which were unstamped by the sanction of aristocratic birth. An exaltation consequent on *acquired* wealth, referred to this peculiar scale, was the spurious gentility of the *upstart*—for there was in the popular mind no other category to which it could be referred.

Such was the state of the popular spirit which must perhaps be regarded as indicative of the real internal advance of Ireland, towards the end of the 18th century.

But a country, fastened by many links to the march of another more advanced, and moving by a different rate of progress, must necessarily offer many remarkable irregularities. The highest tone of refinement, generated by the wealth of England, and the standard of politeness by which its highest classes were regulated, was infused by numerous channels of communication, into the aristocratic circles of this country; in which, taking a higher tone from the national influences heretofore described, they were augmented and set off by numerous native characteristic peculiarities. With us, the pride of aristocracy was not counterchecked by the rivalry of independent industry, learning and genius, or by the useful acquirements and strong cultivated common sense of a wealthy commercial people, but towered freely over the surrounding level, and threw out absurdities and graces of its own.

The first remarkable condition of our Irish intellectual state at that

time, is in a high degree characteristic of the very peculiar state of the country. Its knowledge, manners and literature, like its laws and institutions, were substantially English. The perpetual oscillations of a lingering revolution of eight centuries—a disease of infancy kept alive till old age—had circumscribed to a narrow circle the progress of humanity. The prejudices and animosities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, loaded the very atmosphere of the eighteenth, and sequestered the lower ranks of Irish from all other people. The upper classes were at the same period moving side by side with England, though perhaps with many disadvantages. They had also some advantages not so easily explained, in the very extraordinary prevalence of those peculiar talents, by means of which, intellectual cultivation imparts a tone to social intercourse. Boundless wit, and a sparkling and profuse facility of diction; great vivacity of temperament, and facile affections—these were perhaps the indigenous growth of the land. The long combination of two distinct races, oppositely characterized, had blended into a happy combination the prominent qualifications of both; this too imparted a distinction—they met in the thorough Irish gentleman.

Within the circle thus marked there was a concentrated effusion of wit, genius, and cultivated manners. The bar, the parliament, and the university, were the luminous centres of all that extensive knowledge, intellectual power, and refined intercourse, could impart to society. The genius and the intellectual attainment of that period are now very much liable to be underrated; the vast expansion of intellectual cultivation in both countries, is apt to impress a fallacious estimate on our conception of the pretensions of the former generation. But, as we have already noticed, the individual development is not enlarged in a concurrent ratio with the progress of society; that equalizing principle, of which we have said so much, is not restricted to external circumstances which involve wealth and commercial industry; it affects the intellectual constitution by a similar law. The extension of knowledge, like that of art, produces a necessary division of labour; every branch of science, and every department of research, grows by degrees too complex and wide for the grasp of individual capacity on the duration of human life. And thus an enlarged system of intellectual labour grows, and, while it employs a large portion of the public mind, circumscribes individual effort; thus, by an evident process, superseding and in consequence diminishing much of the power of invention and intellectual resource. At the period of which we speak, it was the ambition of a cultivated mind of the highest order, to have made the circuit of the entire or chief realms of the whole compass of human thought; and in the writings and speeches of the greatest men, will be found a range of materials and an accumulation of attainments, to which it would, now, be nearly ridiculous to pretend. Indeed, it is from a similar application of these considerations that we might explain the secret of that uniform adaptation between the period and the man, which has so often been observed. This is a fact which may find considerable illustration in our history; for, as we proceed in the following lives, there will be observed a very remarkable conformity in the genius of our most eminent men, to the national circumstances



which gave occasion to their public career. The characteristic eloquence of the country, may, to some extent, be thus explained—in the public transactions of the Irish administration, the perfunctory precision of a more advanced constitutional state did not yet exist to supersede private effort; the range of business was not so great as to prohibit the waste of wit and fancy, which adorned and relaxed the labour of public affairs. These qualifications were perhaps heightened by the intermixture of some slight tinges of the barbaric freedom of the hour; the social circle was not so enlarged and cultivated by refinement as to repress peculiarity. The conventional restrictions of modern taste did not exist to subdue the brilliant ebullition of generous natures. A large affusion of inferior cultivation—if we may so speak—the transition manners of a more popular caste which broke in upon, and in every quarter blended with, those of one more cultivated and refined, gave a singular expression of freedom, spirit, and humour, to the compound. There was an atmosphere of spirit, invention, adventure, and unconstrained fervour, favourable in the highest degree to the growth of man's individual character. It was a time and a state of things in which nature asserted all her rights and all her powers in the formation of men. To men thus nurtured, political affairs offered a boundless supply of stimulus and field of effort. The tone of nationality, inherent in the Irish people, was additionally promoted by its small circle of action—even prejudices were maintained on the simple ground of ancestral and hereditary claim—the ties of kindred were interwoven with transmitted maxims, antipathies, and prepossessions. The sympathies of life were quick and vivacious, and he must have been a dull rhetorician who could not touch them.

To give its utmost fertility to the soil thus overcharged with the elements of produce, education bore its ample part. The University of Dublin, standing as it did, alone—the sole resource in Ireland for the higher branches of learning—performed the united offices of both English universities. As a school of divinity, classical literature, and science, not inferior to either; in the compass of her acquirements she surpassed both,—evincing the tempered discretion with which she selected the course of her prescribed studies, so as to combine the ancient and modern; preserving the solid and standard writings of antiquity, without being tainted by obsolete prejudices, or the pedantry of erudition; and seizing the real discoveries and improvements of later times, unobscured by the visionary and ephemeral additions of theory. In that time, the university was not more distinguished for the comprehensive adaptation of her system to the state of knowledge and wants of the age, than for the illustrious men whom she produced,—the best and surest criterion of her excellence. Of these, many continued, as fellows, to reside within her walls, and formed that profoundly intellectual circle among whom Burke, the noblest of her sons, and the great ornament of the age, was accustomed, during his residence in Dublin, to retire to look for fit intercourse for his higher powers and nobler aspirations, when fretted by the small collisions and petty intrigues of Dublin politics. The general influence, thus produced among the middle classes, was considerable indeed, and it appears in the highly cultivated talent, and the still classical recollections of the



eminent wits and orators; who, though they are certainly not to be confused with the entire order to which they belonged, yet unquestionably must still be admitted to be just indications of the state of social cultivation, and as the higher specimens of that state of attainment which was regarded as the standard of qualification in the social circles of which they were conspicuous centres.

In the course of some years before the 19th century had far advanced, the state of literature here described had gradually disappeared. It is difficult to avoid connecting this circumstance with the Union, which undoubtedly dissolved many a brilliant circle of the Irish metropolis. But there were other causes equally obvious, though overlooked in the fury of political contention. The tone of the orator and of the public writer is caught from the general state of the public mind—and the entire intellectual cultivation will ever be pitched in unison to the great main design of all effort. The tone of Grattan, Curran, and those with whom they are to be generally classed, was *academical*; there was no pervading commercial intelligence to impose the succinct and formal statements of official despatch; there was no popular mind to vulgarize or to repress that overcharged display that wins the uncultivated heart. There was a highly wrought and over-cultivated tone, to which literature contributed its full stores, and rhetoric all its studied forms. It must be granted, that it was much characterized by redundancy and excess. But in these great men it was excess of light—oratory in Ireland then sat throned in state, adorned with “barbaric pearls and gold;” it was *then* the garb and ensign of her power. The name of “Irish eloquence” afterwards became a term of not quite candid reproach, yet it was seemingly well justified by an after change of style. The fact demands some notice: in this, too, the principle of national transition can be traced. When the brilliant life of the last generation passed away, a vast diffusion of popular spirit began to be called forth, and at the same time to give a tone and character to the style of public speaking, by which it was excited. The parliament was succeeded by the arena of agitation, which from thenceforth never ceased. While the national prejudices and religious animosities of the people were worked upon with dexterity, talent, and eloquence, the very same process was infusing gleams of intelligence that were at some period to have a far different operation—while the people were concentrating into a party existence, they began to grow in numbers, as well as intelligence. We are here to point out the *first* effect on the taste and talent of Ireland. The change we have been endeavouring to explain operated disadvantageously on both. That many public speakers during this time are to be distinguished for eloquence, and for nearly all the intellectual powers which it ordinarily calls into action, will not be considerably denied. But their style had become such, as with even unusual evidence to show the characterizing tendency to win the vulgar, at the expense of every principle of good taste and sound judgment. A few eminent intellects belonging to the past—or rather to that higher order of intellects, which in all times tower above the creeping influences of tendency, yet remained to contradict the national reproach. But the populace had become the hearers, and the moment brought forth its own peculiar style. Rival orators

contended in the artifices of rhetoric, and the ornaments of imagination; and in their contention, forgot the subject of their discourse: the highest effort was to overlay the minutest quantum of sense with the richest patchwork of purple rags. Hours were wasted down in the elaboration of sentences which astonished the echoes of the criminal courts; and when published in the papers, were for a time the theme of general wonder: every youthful Irishman who pretended to public talent was, more or less, according to his intellectual gauge, betrayed into the cultivation of his fancy as the great element of public life. The same mass of intellect which now supplies the columns of magazines and journals, with smooth, faded commonplaces in polished verse, then sedulously cultivated a far inferior style of oratory, which the gall of Junius can best describe,—“the melancholy madness of poetry, without the inspiration.” Such an epidemic must of course have been on every side limited by the natural intelligence of the human mind. But the cause to which it has been in a chief measure attributed, was itself a result of far more permanent and extensive importance. The popular mind was awakened into intellectual existence,—a fact of which, the boundless importance has not been appreciated; because it has been in a great degree concealed, or rather disguised by incidental circumstances. Thus many will say that a vast mass of prejudice and spurious principle was propagated to lead the popular mind astray, and that the national mind was obscured by opinions more dark than mere ignorance. This may be granted for argument at least. But a more considerate attention will perceive and admit, that in the mean time the *faculties* were brought into an enlarged exertion; the logical faculties began to be trained; the observation roused, and certain general elements of political knowledge, taught. This will be the better understood by considering, that, in the propagation of false conclusions, the main principles used are, for the most part, the general maxims of right and truth which are universally fixed in the minds of men. It is a principle which lies deeply involved under the working of social causes, that error, for the most part, consists in the perversion and distortion of the most important elementary truths, and cannot be propagated far without carrying in its march the light by which it is to be dissipated. The darkness of the middle ages was maintained, not so much by the influence of mere error, as by an external power which arrested and bound the reason: it was not because words supplied the place of principles, but that the progress of inference from any other grounds was sin or treason. The advance of truth which makes the man free is yet not old enough in its progress to be fully understood; and it has not been yet seen that modern delusions have no rooted existence. Reasonings founded on a false basis of fact, and at the same time exposed by a train of results, will not continue to deceive those who have once learned to reason rightly, and to observe shrewdly. A just consideration of this reflection will explain, what a practical acquaintance with the Irish people will not fail to demonstrate, to the dullest observer, who observes rather with his eyes and ears, than by inveterate notions which pass without examination—that their spirit is changed,—a change not to be perceived from afar; because the people are yet everywhere under the



dominion of external influences, forms and conventions, from which the popular crowd can never break, till the force of circumstances set them free. The empire of delusion—while in a last contest, it seems to be repairing its broken bulwarks, and extending anew its demolished outworks—is dissolving silently from within: it is losing its hold upon opinion, even in its inmost citadel; and when the dark edifice of superstition and popular slavery shall have appeared, to those who are now contemplating its advances with dismay, to have gained once more its place of pride—the frowning battlements will have become a shadow. We have chosen thus to express our opinion in types and metaphors, rather than in more express language, because it refers to a state of facts which rather falls within the comprehension of the time in which we live, than of that on which we are about to enter in detail. Yet, having ventured so far, in suggesting the existence of a state of things so wholly out of the contemplation of those who commonly discuss the state of Ireland, we must make a few remarks on the seemingly improbable oversight thus asserted. It seems to have two causes: one, on which it is not necessary to dwell—the miserable condition of darkness, error, and poverty, which affects the wild population of some of the mountain and moorland districts of the country; in some of which the population is purely Celtic, and deeply characterized by all the seemingly irreclaimable features of that race. These districts form a seeming ground of exception to the statement which we have made. A more general fact is this; and, slight as it may seem, it has grown into a consideration of vast importance; it is the superficial character of political investigations in every shape, and on every side. Men look too much to opinions, and too little to realities: they look into reports and journals, speeches and histories, for their facts: they rely on the indications of public meetings, when men do not speak their mind, and where the passions which appear are but the contagion of the crowd,—mere physical sympathies: well instructed in physical statistics, they have no precise knowledge of moral causes. And thus it is, journal answers journal; speech answers speech; and pamphlet answers pamphlet; while few turn a heedful glance upon the working of moral and intellectual principles, the ultimate and irresistible forces of the social world,—as incessant and surrounding as the unseen influence by which the tides observe their stated times. The politician, deeply absorbed in his engrossing game, is to a very considerable extent involved in misrepresentations;—he sets too much value on expedients, and on the peculiar machinery which he holds in his grasp, and has too little reliance on the law of nature, and the power of God.

The same considerations are in a high degree connected with other facts on which we shall not enter at large. It will be enough to say, that the peculiar tendencies, affecting the political sentiments of the Irish peasantry, have not hitherto been identical with the democratic spirit which has been so much noticed as belonging to other countries. A growing advance in the condition of the people—in manners and comforts—has contributed to spread among them a spirit of independence; than which nothing is so likely to emancipate them from the false and servile influences out of which most of their errors and misfortunes have arisen. No man of sound understanding, and in pos-



session of the necessities and comforts of life, will ever desire to see popular disturbances.

To conclude; as it cannot fail to be observed, that in the statement here offered to our readers, we have broken off at those points, where the practical facts and applications might be expected to follow, we must again point out the peculiarity of our designs, which was to present a rough and summary outline of the characteristic condition of the period on which we are now to enter. It was characteristically a period replete with the elements and workings of a great revolution, the development of which belongs to a further period. A revolution, not effected either by democratic strivings—as has falsely been supposed—or by the expertness of party leaders, or the measures of administrations; but by causes wholly antecedent, of which they are but effects. In adverting to results, we have been reserved; for they are not within our present scope; in the statement of principles we have endeavoured to be as distinct as a necessary economy of space would allow; because the language which we have been forced for clearness to use is pre-occupied by all sorts of prejudice.

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## I. POLITICAL SERIES.

### **Ulysses Maximilian Browne.**

BORN A.D. 1705.—DIED A.D. 1757.

THIS illustrious soldier was the son of “an expatriated Irish officer; he entered the Austrian service, and, by his great skill and bravery when employed against the Turks, rose to the rank of field-marshal. He afterwards greatly distinguished himself at Placentia, and other places in Italy; and at length died of the wounds he had received at the battle of Prague.”\*

### **Charles Lucas, M.D.**

BORN A.D. 1713.—DIED A.D. 1771.

THE divisions which we have chosen to observe in the order of these memoirs, are now to be connected in the lives of a few distinguished persons who, having attained public notice in the termination of one period, have lived also within the beginning of that which follows. Such memoirs, belonging to two periods, may be disposed so as best to favour the historical purpose to which our biography is but secondary. Lucas—whose professional character, had it particularly demanded any commemoration would properly be placed in our literary division—is here to be noticed on account of his political celebrity; and he is chiefly selected here for the occasion which the principal inci-

\* Maunder's Biographical Treasury.

dents of his life present for a slight retrospect, which, with a few additional details in our memoir of lord Charlemont, will connect the historical events related in a former volume, with the more momentous and interesting order of events into which the subsequent memoirs must lead.

The ancestors of Lucas were farmers in the county of Clare. It is supposed that, by misfortune or mismanagement, the property of his family was lost. The earliest notice we have been enabled to obtain of him places him as an apothecary in Dublin. At a subsequent period he took the degree of doctor of medicine. Of his private history the details are few. And we shall, therefore, here proceed to introduce the civil contests in which he bore a distinguished part; and which we consider to have interest both as true indications of an interval in which our history is nearly silent, and also still more importance, as the first steps and faint beginnings of a different state of things. These, as we have suggested, appertain rather to the termination of the former period than to the beginning of the present, into which Lucas lived about eleven years. It is thus that he becomes an intermediate link between the two.

The interval between the revolution of 1688, and the accession of George III., was one of comparative tranquillity, and which offers little to the narration of history. As, upon a general view might be anticipated, this interval was productive of some national growth in the wealth, numbers and intelligence of the middle classes. An advance, however, both concealed, and, to a great extent, retarded and neutralized by the internal abuses—the misgovernment, and the dissensions, essentially belonging to an immature and crude state of society. A most complicated system of abuses prevailed—a powerful aristocracy, consisting of a few great families, possessed an unconstitutional influence, the remains of an unconstitutional power. No longer permitted to bring their followers to the field—they contended to outweigh each other in the scale of faction. To steer between these, to obtain a preponderance by their division, and to govern by means of the secret influences of intrigue, subordination and terror, was the policy of the Castle,—a policy inconsistent with the good government of a well-ordered constitution, but not perhaps without some reasonable excuse in the times to which it is referred.

An immediate consequence of such a state of things was the diffusion of a violent spirit of faction into every institution, and into every public department. There was a pervading influence of abuse, feebly counteracted by a faint spirit of opposition,—principles which, however, were gradually to become more balanced as the public advanced in political growth. There was not yet a sufficient power in the popular elements of opposition—since so enormously accumulated into a preponderance—to give weight and sanction to mere popular resistance. The Geraldine might encounter the Butler—not as of old upon the field, but in the walls of a most corrupt and subservient parliament, with the votes they could respectively muster on the floor; and other great powers, similarly organized, might exercise a similar weight with safety. But, for men like Lucas, it was wholly a different thing. The administration were not compelled to

stand on points of law, or, as has since often occurred, to allow themselves to be evaded and defied from behind the seemingly insignificant intrenchments of form; still less was power deterred from going straight to its victim by any weight existing in public opinion.

To be a patriot then was something—there was neither the stimulus of applause, nor the prospect of self-interest. The man might be mistaken, but his honesty could scarce be doubted. It was his part to brave opposite dangers—the despotism of power, and the animosity of faction, under circumstances in which ambition or the hope of preferment had little to expect. The first appearance of Dr Lucas, upon the public scene, was in the commencement of the growth of that popular spirit which was afterwards, before his death, to make a bold and effective stand against such a state of things.

Having early obtained a dangerous notoriety as a political writer, he was, by the notice on some occasion drawn upon his writings, under the necessity of escaping to the continent. On his return, he was elected a member of the common council, where a field soon offered for the most praiseworthy and honourable, as well as spirited resistance to the encroachments and abuses of the privy council. The Irish parliament had, in compensation for the act of settlement in the reign of Charles II., given up the corporations of Ireland to be most available engines of despotic control in the hands of the administration: and the Irish government, using the advantage to its full extent, deprived the corporation of Dublin of its popular character, by transferring some of its most important powers from the whole body to the board of aldermen,—well indeed considering that such bodies must become more inclined to subserviency, and in every way more manageable, as their powers become vested in a smaller and more privileged circle. We do not presume to say that an alderman is less likely to be an honest man than a common-council man,—looking generally, the contrary is the fact; but one of a small body will always be found more prudential and less bold than one of a multitude. He is more marked; he stands closer to the seat of corruption and corrupt influence; and it is to be confessed, has more tempting allurements. We feel in duty bound to add—though in no way necessary to our immediate concern,—that there is an opposite extreme. Corporate institutions, when they contain too large an infusion of the democratic element, can answer no good purpose: but can only tend to give the same unconstitutional authority to a rabble, as the former to a despotic power. That the effect of this is, no one can doubt, to throw power into the hands of those irresponsible and often unprincipled individuals by whom the elements of disorder are governed, so far as may be. But to proceed: the aldermen, not content with the privileges conferred on them by the stated changes, usurped several rights to which they had no claim—and by these means obtained a degree of influence and authority, which they used for the private ends of providing for their own families, and sharing among themselves every lucrative post.

It was in or about the year 1743, that Lucas and another common-council man, Mr James Latouche—a name honourable in the records of Dublin—entered together into concert for the purpose of withstanding the power of the board of aldermen.



At that time, it appears that the city estate was encumbered to the amount of £30,000—a circumstance which these gentlemen considered as attributable to mismanagement, and perhaps to other abuses of a more exceptionable nature. It was while engaged upon this inquiry, that a new quarry started before their scrutiny. They thought they had discovered that the right of electing aldermen was not in the board; but in the entire corporate body, the mayor, sheriffs, commons, &c. A committee to inspect the city records, was appointed in the common council, with Mr Latouche as chairman. Three reports were brought in, strengthened with the most eminent legal opinions: a suit was brought in the King's Bench, on a motion of *quo warranto* against the last elected alderman; but after a hearing, the court refused to grant permission for an information. The efforts of the common council were thus rendered abortive, and the main confederates were left to sustain the weight of the board's displeasure, which was shown by striking their names out of the triennial returns of common-council men.

A series of spirited exertions on the part of Lucas, which were displayed during the continuation of this contest, brought both himself and his able confederate into great and popular notoriety. In 1740, the death of Sir J. Somerville, the member for Dublin, left a vacancy in the representation, for which Latouche, Lucas, and another gentleman, set up their claims, and addressed the electors. This competition was looked upon with an eye of satisfaction by the aldermanic board, who anticipated the division of their adversaries with no unfavourable eye; and agreeably with such an expectation, the common council quickly began to fall asunder: a division took place, in which the several merits of the respective candidates were maintained by their adherents.

This disunion, however, took a turn unfavourable to Lucas: his antagonist had taken a leading part in the previous contest, and been not only the chairman of the committee, and drawn up the three several reports which had been published on the part of the common council, but the tone which he took in the contest was far more moderate, and less calculated to compromise him with any party. The position which he had thus obtained rendered it necessary for Lucas to go to extreme lengths. While Latouche only questioned the jurisdiction of the board, Lucas arraigned their administration, and thus made personal enemies among a powerful and influential body. Unhappily he thought it essential to his success to go to farther and still more dangerous lengths. Latouche confined himself to the politics of the corporation; but Lucas, in his address to the council, denounced the public conduct of the administration, and assailed the authorities and the parliament, in language which laid him open to the charge of sedition. Lucas was evidently, though by nature endowed with considerable abilities—a man of more heat than discretion; and we can have no doubt, from the comparison of his addresses, that his entire conduct was, in that respect, the result of pure inadvertence: he hoped to distinguish himself over his discreet antagonist, by displaying his zeal for the rights and liberties of the people; and, while acting a popular farce not uncommon among popular men, he overlooked the

ears and eyes of a far more formidable power. In one of his addresses\* this sentence occurs, which, as it but more distinctly expresses what is variously and strongly suggested throughout, we may quote as his own sentiment. "If he (Latouche) be a true advocate for liberty, let him show it in setting forth your constitutional rights and liberties." And it was in the full and unqualified spirit of this dangerous defiance that he spoke and wrote. The politic and wary colleague and rival who was thus evoked to plunge, "upon a raw and gusty day," into the dangerous tide of democratic agitation, saw more clearly, or more prudently avoided the obvious peril. But Lucas shrunk from no extreme of daring appeal and defiance; and while he simply looked to outgo his rival in popularity, he roused the apprehension or the policy of the administration. It has, indeed, been argued, from the general quiet of the town and country, as well as from the apparent indifference manifested during these corporation contests, by the Castle and the law-officers of the crown, that no danger was in any way attached to the conduct of Lucas; and that the violence, of which he soon after became the mark, was simply for the purpose of putting him down, and the result rather of a conspiracy among the aldermen than any resentment or policy of government. We have little doubt in combining both reasons. Whatever importance might have been attached by the government to a contest, of which it was the tendency to instil a democratic spirit in the corporation, or to a series of pamphlets and speeches, which, whether well designed or not, were well adapted to diffuse a similar spirit among the people; the elevation of their author to an eminence of far more public authority and influence was, unquestionably, an object to be feared. The success of Lucas in arousing popular sentiment was even surprisingly great; nor do we think it can be a stretch of conjecture to refer the spirit of a period, later by not many years, to his exertion as a main origin. In a country, of which the state was so immature and so replete with all the elements of confusion, and which was, in a measure, governed by a system of (perhaps) necessary abuses, such sentiments, when once fully roused, could never again wholly sink to rest. They are truly like those waves of incidental motion, which Mr Babbage supposes to be propagated, without end, into the mass of undulations with which space is filled.†

On his part, Mr Latouche took the precisely opposite tone: against the abuses, real or supposed, of the corporation, he declared his hostility; but, as to the questions of more general scope, entertained so violently by his rival, he, as distinctly, declared his dissent from his opinions. The connexion between the two kingdoms he viewed as too fixed to be shaken—he denied the dependence of Ireland to be an evil, and pointed out the great and unquestionable benefits of which it was the source—and deprecated, as rash and ruinous, any attempt to awaken jealousies between the two countries. Of the substantial truth and wisdom of these sentiments referred to that time, we can have no doubt. To see the question in a different point of view, it is necessary to commit the very general fallacy of looking on that

\* The 14th, page 35.

† Ninth Bridgewater Treatise.

period through the history of after times, and applying reasons drawn from a different stage of national, and, indeed, human progress. Ireland was misgoverned; and we much doubt if it could have been otherwise; but it must be admitted, that, under the tyranny—if it will be called so—of “an old and haughty nation, proud in arms,” Ireland had, even at this time, arrived at a state of civilization far beyond most of the continental nations, of which the advance had been less interrupted. Ireland had, indeed, passed for centuries through the process which no other country could have survived. It was the firm tie that bound her to the mighty frame of England that upheld and carried her onward on the wave of national vicissitude and progress. The motives of Mr Latouche, like those of most public men, may have been factious; but we think the ground which he took to have been reconcileable with an enlarged patriotism.

While the contest between these two men was pending, an event occurred which altered the face of affairs. Mr Alderman Pearson, the other member for the city, died in May, 1749, and put an end to the competition. In this emergency, the board of aldermen set up a third candidate, a Mr Charles Burton, whose father, Mr Benjamin Burton, had been a whig alderman, who had long been the representative for the city, and had suffered considerably in the cause of the corporation. This gentleman had left a considerable property to his son, who having likewise become an alderman, was now called upon by his civic brethren to stand for the city.

The popular party was alarmed, and a junction between the rivals was urged. This they acceded to, and appeared together in the hall; but it was quite evident that there was still a hostile feeling between them. The friends of Lucas admit that he had attacked Latouche so unfairly, and with such bitterness, that it was impossible to suppose the existence of any sincere cordiality.

While the two popular candidates continued to harangue the companies in their halls, the candidates of the board took to the more efficient and less laborious method of a personal canvass. This, too, was loudly denounced by Lucas as an invasion of their liberties. In the mean time, an accidental circumstance gave much encouragement to the board of aldermen.

The tolls and customs had for a considerable time been falling in value, from the mismanagement of the collectors, and it was not unreasonably thought that this would, to a great extent, be remedied by committing them to the charge of individual self-interest,—the best security that the constitution of things perhaps affords. On this understanding, an alderman undertook to farm them for a term of years at a very advanced rate. Lucas immediately denounced the transaction as a job, and alleged that the assembly of the commons, in which the proposal had been discussed and carried, was a packed assembly, and insinuated that they who had been summoned were slaves to the board, and prompt to execute their purposes.

Thus it will at once be seen, a large party of the commons must have been insulted and irritated; and the effect was immediately felt. Acting promptly on the occasion, the board obtained a resolution from which the commons could not well shrink—that so lowering a charge



against their own body was false, scandalous, and malicious. Lucas attempted to defend himself, but was refused a hearing; while the common council, in a second meeting, not only voted a confirmation of the former censure, but passed a resolution of thanks to the author of a pamphlet called "Lucas Detected," which was read in council.

The result was an appeal on the part of Lucas and his friends, from the common council to the corporations. So far they succeeded. Fifteen out of the twenty-five corporations took their part.

But, in the mean time, a general collision of public sentiment and party feeling could not fail to grow out of such a prolonged and exciting contest. In all party strivings, it is known that everything that is done or said, and every passion that is excited becomes magnified and altered as it passes from circle to circle, and that all accusation, when it thus loads the breeze of rumour, soon assumes the most extreme shape. The writings and speeches of Lucas were understood as the cover of worse designs than they expressed; and it, indeed, required no misinterpretation to render them in the highest degree obnoxious. He was supposed to be the author of a weekly paper, called the "Censor," which was filled with the most scandalous attacks upon his antagonists. Of this the language was brutal, malignant, and replete with the froth and venom of the lowest malignity; so that, indeed, we have our doubts as to the fairness of ascribing it to Lucas, though it breathes of the atmosphere in which his very virtues must, to some extent, have placed him.

While those disputes were at the height, lord Harrington, the lord-lieutenant, came over. His character was popular, and it was a general impression that he would be inclined to side against the aldermen. Some circumstances of a determining complexion were yet unknown, and there were current many reports of his private conversation and sentiments, very much adapted to awaken the expectations of the popular party. Under such impressions, Lucas was induced to wait upon him, and to present him with a copy of the papers which formed the substance of those writings and addresses for which he had been accused. The lord-lieutenant listened to him, with the civility which belonged to his own character and to strict justice. He asked him questions, listened politely and patiently to his replies, and dismissed him with every mark of courtesy. Lucas took all this, as might be anticipated from his own blunt and frank simplicity of character and ignorance of manners. He failed to notice that lord Harrington had expressed no opinion, but had simply, and in candour, given him a fair hearing. It did not occur to him that no inference could be drawn from the courtesy of a gentleman, or that the lord-lieutenant did not feel himself called on to exercise that more rude office of repulsion, which more appropriately belongs to the Cerberus who stands at the outer door. Lucas, in his simplicity, considered the field his own, and felt himself authorized to reckon on the countenance of the lord-lieutenant. On the next levee he accordingly came, but was surprised and mortified by an intimation to withdraw.

There could be little doubt as to the real meaning of such an indication: and a few days after, on the opening of the parliament, the lord-lieutenant's speech contained an allusion too plain to be misunderstood.

Two days after, the subject was directly introduced; a complaint was made, enumerating all the several writings in which Lucas had expressed the most decided sentiments of a popular tendency, and it was moved and ordered that he and his printer should next day attend, to be examined before a committee of the house.

He attended, offered to vindicate himself, and was, of course, told that he was there only to answer such questions as should be put. Among other evidence brought forward, the books and papers which he had presented to the lord-lieutenant were produced. When he was ordered to withdraw, four resolutions were passed, affirmatory of his guilt, and calling for a prosecution, with an order that he should at once be committed a close prisoner in Newgate jail, for his infringement and violation of the privileges of the house.

Sir Thomas Prendergast alone made an ineffectual stand in his favour, and it was clear that there was a strong combination of hostility accumulated against him, from which it was also plain that there was no efficient shelter. Convinced of this, Lucas withdrew from the impending danger, by returning to England.

His absence, as usual in such cases, abated the edge of hostility, and gave rise to the gradual development of a reaction in his favour, of which he afterwards reaped the benefit.

On his return, he was elected member for the city. Here a new field was open for the exertion of his practical talent and keen popular spirit. He was not slow to seize upon the occasion, and took a prominent part in obtaining leave to bring in a bill to limit the duration of parliaments. As this is but one of the incidents of a long-continued struggle, we shall not here enter upon the discussion of it. We cannot afford to prolong the memoir of Lucas, and have only so far gone into detail as we consider the foregoing transactions to have an important relation to the first commencement of a train of historical events, into which we are to enter in detailed succession in a succeeding memoir. We must now hurry to a close.

The remainder of his political life may be succinctly given in the list of bills which Lucas endeavoured in vain to bring in for the amelioration and advantage of the country—all, we may add, unquestionably adapted to remedy great and obvious evils. Of these it was severally the intent to secure the freedom and independence of parliament, by ascertaining the qualifications of the members, and for vacating the seats of such members as should accept of any office under the crown.

In 1765, the heads of a bill which had been sent over to England were returned, with a new interpolated clause, vesting a dispensing power in the king in council. Against this Lucas, with other active members of the popular party, exerted themselves in vain, and Lucas published an address on the subject to his constituents, in which he attacked the measure with his wonted spirit and impetuosity.

As might be indeed imagined, the man of popular assemblies was not altogether as effective as a speaker in an assembly of lawyers and trained orators. The following extract from Mr Hardy, in his life of Charlemont, is probably as correct as it is graphic. "As a politician, he was, as the Duc de Beaufort was called during the time of the Fronde at Paris, *un roi des halles*—a sovereign of the corporations.



In the house of commons his importance was withered, and comparatively shrunk to nothing; for the most furious reformer must admit that, however the representation was in many instances narrowed into private interests, it still embraced the most conspicuous and useful orders in the state, where, if education and knowledge are not to be found, how are they to be sought after? Lucas had, in truth, little or no knowledge as a leader in parliament; and his efforts there were too often displayed in a sort of tempestuous alacrity to combat men, whose lofty disregard of him left them at full liberty to pursue their argument as if nothing had disturbed them. Self-command, whether constitutional or arising from occasional contempt, is a most potent auxiliary. His opponents were sometimes, indeed, rendered indignant; but, whether calm or angry, the battle always left him worse than before. Yet, with all this precipitancy, and too frequent want of knowledge, he annexed a species of dignity to himself in the house of commons that was not without its effect."

Lucas was, nevertheless, very much respected by several of the most eminent English as well as Irish noblemen of his generation, and this fact has value in our general estimate of him in two ways. The higher nobility of England, in very few cases, and those marked as exceptions by some eccentricity of character, have been known to stoop so very low as to countenance pretensions arising from mere popularity. Such persons living in the great world, and conversant with the ways of men, are always unlikely to be imposed upon by the vulgar insolence of pretended patriotism; and, as the conduct of Lucas was, in fact, such as might appear to expose him to the suspicion of being actuated by a low popular ambition, we are inclined to consider the respect with which he was met as tending to prove the same inference which we have already urged. We consider that it must have been felt among the better order of public men at that time, that Lucas had right and justice on his side, and the real good of Ireland at heart. The king, George III., also, may be inferred, from some passages in the writings of Lucas, to have in some way shown him kindness, and the loyalty of Lucas was, like all his sentiments, enthusiastic.

In one of his later writings, there is an affecting confession of the weariness he felt of a life of labour and sacrifice spent in vain. We may extract a few sentences:—"I have quitted a comfortable settlement in a free country, to embark in your service. I have attended constantly, closely, strictly to my duty. I have broke my health, impaired my fortune, hurt my family, and lost an object dearer to me than life, by engaging with unwearied care and painful assiduity, in this painful, thankless, perilous service. All this might be tolerable, if I could find myself useful to you or to my country. But the only benefit I can see, results to those whom I cannot look upon as friends to my country; bands of policemen and pensioners, whose merit is enhanced, and whose number has been generally increased in proportion to the opposition given to the measures of ministers. I dare not neglect, much less desert my station, but I wish by any lawful or honourable means, for my dismissal."

As a physician, Dr Lucas obtained considerable practice. Lord Charlemont was among those who employed and derived advantage



from his skill. It is not unlikely that his political character and connexion must have extended his professional walk not a little; while it may be as justly presumed to have engrossed much of his time and industry; but then it is to be acknowledged, that medical science lay within a smaller compass. In 1756, he published a treatise upon the Bath waters, which raised his medical reputation greatly at the time.

In his old age, he was an object of general respect—which his appearance and venerable deportment in society contributed to increase. During the latter years of his life, he was reduced to the lowest state of infirmity by repeated attacks of gout, so that he was always carried to the house of commons, where he could scarcely stand for a moment. In this situation he is thus described, “the gravity and uncommon neatness of his dress; his gray, venerable locks, blending with a pale but interesting countenance, in which an air of beauty was still visible, altogether excited attention, and I never knew a stranger come into the house, without asking who he was.”

He was married three times—at his last marriage he was so crippled as to be carried to bed. He left children by his three wives.

He died in 1771. He had a public funeral, attended by the lord mayor and principal members of the corporation in their robes—as well as by numerous members of the house of commons. A subscription was raised, chiefly among the merchants of Dublin, for a statue which was placed in the royal exchange.

## Anthony Malone.

BORN A.D. 1700.—DIED A.D. 1776.

THE history of the family of Malone is deeply interesting for its well authenticated antiquity, and will be found by the curious reader detailed at sufficient length in Mr Archdall's edition of *Lodge*.\* From this valuable account, we select a few particulars.

The Malones are a branch of the O'Connor family. The reader is already aware, that at an early period, before fixed surnames began to identify by a common name the descendants of a common ancestor, the individuals of a family were designated by some local or personal distinction—a custom which is indeed yet to be traced among the Irish—though these distinctions are confined to their own language. Of this, examples may be pointed out in the branches of the O'Conors yet remaining. One of the descendants of this family having become bald, or been tonsured in honour of St John—for Archdall mentions two accounts—obtained the name of ‘Maol Eoin,’ i. e. bald John. This became in the course of time corrupted into Malone: and as this occurred soon after the custom of surnames was introduced, it became the family name.

In the wars between the kings of Meath and Connaught, the latter were mostly successful. And in the latter end of the eleventh century, they obtained a settlement in West Meath, for the branch of bald

\* *Lodge*, Vol. vii. p. 280.

John. This was a district closely bordering on Connaught, on the east of the Shannon, and a few miles from Athlone. As this was near the ancient see of Clonmacnoise, the Malones were considerable benefactors to the abbey, of which many of them had been abbots. The ancient estate of the family is called Ballymahone, or Riverstown, within 5 miles from Athlone, and is we believe yet in the family.

We now pass to Richard, the father of Anthony Malone. If the want of materials did not offer an insurmountable obstacle, it would be no less our duty to commemorate this eminent man in a separate memoir, as from the brief and scanty accounts of him which we possess, he seems to have been a man of first rate legal and forensic powers, and to have possessed talents very much the same in quality and combination, as those of his more known son. We shall here offer the few particulars which remain.

While yet a student in the temple, Richard Malone was employed by the interest of lord Galway as a negotiator in Holland, and obtained the warm approbation of king William for the discretion and ability with which he acquitted himself of his charge. In the year 1700, he was called to the Irish bar, at which he soon rose to so high a reputation that no other barrister of his time, or, excepting his son of the generation immediately succeeding, was considered to have any claim of equal comparison with him. The following portrait is given by Mr Archdall:—"Richard Malone is said to have somewhat resembled the late Sir Robert Walpole, but was handsomer and better made than that eminent statesman. His person and deportment were graceful and engaging; his countenance was placid, yet expressive; and his voice strong and sweet. In every cause in which he was engaged he was so strenuous and ardent that, when defeated, his clients acquiesced without murmuring, from a conviction that nothing was lost for want of ability or exertion. In stating cases, he peculiarly excelled, and was no less happy in his addresses to juries, whose passions he could at all times wind to his purpose. His knowledge in the subtle and profound parts of the law, and his accuracy in drawing pleadings, both in law and equity, were equal to his elocution, which was of the first rate."

Such was the worthy father of a worthy son who followed in his track in times more favourable to his fame. He left four sons, who all arrived at high practice during their father's life. Anthony, the eldest, and the subject of the following notice, was born in December, 1700. In his twentieth year he entered as a gentleman commoner in Christ Church College, Oxford. He continued there two years, after which he removed to London to pursue his legal studies in the Temple; and in May, 1726, he was called to the Irish bar. The following year he was elected to represent the county of Westmeath, in parliament—and continued to hold his seat without any interruption till 1760.

In 1733, he married a daughter of Sir Ralph Gore, speaker of the house of commons. In 1740, he was appointed prime serjeant, and held the office for fourteen years, till 1754, when he was dismissed for joining in an effort to maintain the right of the house of commons to dispose of unappropriated sums without the crown's consent,—an act

of insubordination which may serve at the lowest to illustrate the high tone of independence, at that time participated in by few. Under the overruling and encroaching system of castle or council supremacy, which pervaded every institution in that day, it was not easy for such a man to continue long in any connexion with the administration: while, at the same time, his commanding powers and high reputation rendered it impossible that he should be passed over in the official appointments of his profession. In 1757, he was appointed chancellor of the exchequer, but was dismissed in 1760, on which he again assumed his barrister's gown. He soon after obtained a seat in the privy council, and a patent of precedence at the bar, before any of the legal officers of the crown,—“a precedence,” says Archdall, “as was justly observed at the time, which nature had given him before, and which the king could not take from him.”

In the latter periods of his career, it will be inferred from his more close connexion with government, that he must have attached himself to the policy of an administration, of which he cannot be presumed to have approved. But the condition of the country was then very peculiar; the time had, in fact, not arrived for effective opposition. There was no general spirit of resistance, and no strong phalanx of independence, and genius, to resist. A person (like Lucas for example,) of strong zeal, with a fiery spirit, and a breast impatient in the vindication of national rights, without a wide comprehension of constitutional workings, their causes and tendencies, would be led on to take his stand on local abuses, and partial questions, and waste much industry, acuteness, zeal, and courage, in a hopeless war of outposts. But the sagacity of a great constitutional lawyer was not so to be deceived. Malone soon began to measure, with a clear insight, the true forces which were at work, and to compute with precision, what the true value of opposition was likely to be. He saw how far off the period really was, when a resistance, which must depend on a combination of circumstances and talents not then existing, could have any prospect of success. He never doubted that all efforts, which might tend to promote and keep alive the spirit of constitutional resistance, must tend, however remotely, to good effects. But he saw where, and how, he could himself be most serviceable to his country. He saw, what was universally apparent, that there existed no effectual opposition; and that the only consequence which followed from an unavailing resistance was, that it wholly neutralized the talent and public virtue of those by whom it was offered: and he most wisely conceived that his own influential and authoritative abilities ought to be disposed where alone they could have any weight. It seemed to him, and justly, that, by obtaining weight and authority in the Irish government, he might enlighten and moderate its councils; and thus, in some degree, temper the measures of a power which he saw it was vain to resist. That these were mainly his actuating sentiments, appears strongly suggested by a passage which we shall here extract from Archdall. “Having found, by observation and experience, that, in all the contests between Ireland and England, Ireland was finally the sufferer, he thought it most prudent—as he has more than once observed to the writer of this account—to make the best compromise that could be made with our



powerful neighbours; and, on all great occasions, to conciliate rather than to exasperate." With such views he supported the measures of government, while he endeavoured in the privy council, and often with success, to turn away, in the beginning, such councils as he saw likely to lead to prejudicial results.

His honesty was never called in question; it was so conspicuous a portion of his character, and so distinctly indicated in every part of his public conduct and private conversation, that it could never occur to the most fastidious observer, to refer his actions to any motive but the most honourable. He scrupulously abstained from seeking those favours from the government, to which every public man who supports its main policy has a just claim, and may both ask and accept without reproach. The principle of his public conduct was perfectly understood; *in council* he uniformly withstood such measures as he considered in any way detrimental to the interest of Ireland, and thus in numerous instances succeeded in obtaining important modifications of measures, which he was in consistency as well as prudence obliged to support in public; a rule of conduct which, it is allowed, is the obligation of every public man who has any weight; but at that time more especially necessary on distinct grounds. "On many great occasions," writes his panegyrist, "did he successfully oppose in the privy council, measures which he considered prejudicial to Ireland, and unjustifiable; choosing rather to benefit his country, by crushing baneful projects while yet in agitation, than to snatch at a fleeting popularity, by opposing them when matured and submitted to the decision of parliament."

Even in his practice as a barrister, there was a very general impression that his advocacy was, in a very unusual manner, governed by a fastidious natural equity. On the wrong side of the argument, much of his power was repressed; he stated the arguments fairly in behalf of his client, but he disdained to adorn false claims with the specious falsehood of sophistry. On such occasions he discharged his duty, but no more; and it was considered as an unfavourable sign of the event of a suit, when at the close of his statement he left the court.

For the first twenty years, according to the custom in Ireland, he practised in all the courts,—a custom which we believe still exists, and must continue to exist, in a country in which it is impossible that, to a junior at least, the business of any one court could afford a sufficient share of employment. During the last thirty years of his life he confined himself to Equity business.

His style is described as a model of forensic eloquence—plain, flowing, perspicuous, and uniformly adapted to his subject; deriving force as well as clearness from a masterly arrangement of his arguments and topics; and, such at the same time was the fulness of his statement, that he left the impression that there could be nothing more said upon the subject. He seems to have merited the description of Antony which is given by Cicero, "*Omnia veniebant Antonio in mentem; eaque suo quæque in loco ubi plurimum proficere et valere possent*,"—Mr Grattan, giving that testimony which is of all praise the most valuable, has preserved the following recollections,

which we give entire with his own comment. "Mr Malone, one of the characters of 1753, was a man of the finest intellect that any country ever produced." "The three ablest men I have ever heard were, Mr Pitt (the father), Mr Murray, and Mr Malone. For a popular assembly, I would choose Mr Pitt; for a privy council, Murray; for twelve wise men, Malone." This was the opinion which lord Sackville, the secretary of 1753, gave to a gentleman from whom I heard it. "He is a great sea in a calm," said Mr Gerrard Hamilton, another great judge in men and talents; "Ay," it was replied, "but had you seen him when he was young, you would have said that he was a great sea in a storm, and, like the sea, whether in calm or storm, he was a great production of nature."

Mr Malone has been praised for the sweet serenity of his temper, for the grace of his manner, and for the lofty composure with which he ever looked down superior on slight causes of irritation or disappointment.

He continued to take a part in public proceedings, and was in the fullest exercise of his profession to the time of his death, which occurred on 8th May, 1776.

A writer who has given in the first number of the *Dublin Penny Journal*, a brief sketch, which is apparently drawn from the same source which has supplied the chief part of the foregoing memoir, has remarked with great propriety—"Though our task is to record the characters of those whom death has placed beyond the reach of flattery, and not to eulogize the living generation, we cannot avoid remarking the strong resemblance which the above sketch bears to a distinguished member of the same profession in our own times. The peculiar modesty of that individual would feel hurt by the coupling of his name with so high a panegyric, but the members of his profession will find no difficulty in identifying him with the picture." We extract this sentence, because it contains a most just and appropriate comparison, of which—if the main features of this memoir have any truth—the propriety is so striking as to demand no addition of a name. The combination of faithful service with proud integrity; of rational patriotism with scorn of popularity; are not the profuse production of any period of history. The peculiar style which derives perspicuity and power from order, from the due subordination and the masterly arrangement, is not the characteristic of many Irish orators of the best periods of our senate or bar. When we but remotely advert to the high spirit and delicate sense of honour which has ever shrunk from the shadow of imputation, and even kept the public man subordinate to the high-spirited Irish gentleman; the picture is as complete as if it came from the hand of Cregan or Rothwell, Burton or Lawrence.

## James, Earl of Charlemont.

BORN A.D. 1728.—DIED A.D. 1799.

THE life of James, earl of Charlemont, has been through various channels placed before the public, with an unusual degree of detail.

And we should hold ourselves exempt from the obligation to enter minutely, or at length, into statements which have been so often and so variously repeated, were it not for the peculiarly central station which his lordship occupied during the most important interval of our history.

The ancestors of his race have been already noticed in these pages.\* His grandfather, the second viscount Charlemont, took a forward and distinguished part in the wars which preceded and led to the revolution of 1688; and was visited with attainder and sequestration by the parliament of James II. He was restored to his honours and possessions by William, from whom he obtained several promotions, and that ancient honour of his family, the government of Charlemont fort. He served under the celebrated earl of Peterborow in Spain. At the siege of Barcelona he won signal honour, in the command of the first brigade, at the head of which he forced an entrance. And immediately after, he obtained still higher distinction by his conduct in an attack upon the citadel of Monjuich. On this occasion he was presented by lord Peterborow to the king of Spain, as one whose services merited special notice, and received his majesty's thanks accordingly. Advancing by a rapid ascent in the career of military distinction, he rose by merit to the rank of major-general, and was made governor of the counties of Tyrone and Armagh. He married the only daughter of primate Margetson, and by her had five daughters and seven sons; of whom James, the second son, and father to James the subject of the following memoir, was the third viscount.

His second son James, of whom we are now to relate the history, was born in Dublin on the 18th of August, 1728.

From the delicacy of his constitution it was not thought advisable to send him to a public school, and he was accordingly educated at home by private tutors,—a method, of which we think we can trace the advantages and disadvantages in every part of his after life. The singleness and purity of his character, which render him an eminent model of all that is noble and high in the character of the perfect gentleman; the heart, without fear or reproach, may be in some measure traced to his fortunate isolation from the most sure working and swift of all moral contaminations, those which are infused at that age, when every impression imparts something to the growth of the character; while the want of that rough training, and those hourly collisions which arm the schoolboy with indifference and nerve, in the gaze of the public eye, may be in some degree detected in the reserve which kept his lordship silent in parliament. This may perhaps be refining overmuch; it may be admitted that it is easier to enumerate hundreds of home-bred *roués* or school-bred mutes, than a gentleman or statesman like the earl of Charlemont. Among his tutors, one was that Mr Murphy—whose name is so familiar to the schoolboy as the editor of the lesser dialogues of Lucian—a gentleman who acquitted himself so satisfactorily in his charge, that he earned the respect and friendship of his pupil, and was afterwards the companion of his travels.

In 1746, at the early age of eighteen, he had completed no incon-



siderable range of classical reading. It is mentioned by Mr Hardy that, having found his extreme deficiency in school attainments when the instructions of Mr Murphy were obtained, he then devoted himself to his studies with such close industry as to injure his sight. It must have been a seasonable relaxation to such assiduity, when in his eighteenth year he was sent to travel on the continent. Notwithstanding his youth, it is easy to perceive that his understanding was fully matured for the advantages of travel; he set out with a mind pre-eminently qualified to be instructed by a wide and various range of observation and intercourse. His first visit was to Holland, where he had the good fortune to be present during a political movement of considerable interest, terminated by the establishment of the prince of Orange in the government. From thence he visited the English army in Germany, where he was received with distinction by the duke of Cumberland, with whom, if we rightly understand Mr Hardy, he remained some time as a guest, and who was very kind to him ever after.

From the English camp he proceeded to Turin, eager perhaps to visit a place no less deeply interesting to the classical scholar for its historical recollections, than for its ancient and celebrated university. It must be considered as a highly characteristic incident of his life, that, immediately after his arrival, he entered as a student in the academy of Turin, which was, we believe, appropriated for persons of rank, and pursued his studies there for a year,—a step which indicates, most unequivocally, the order to which his frame of mind belonged; the study of self-improvement, and the eager and curious appetite for acquirement, frequent enough in those who have been taught the advantage of these attainments by their want; but only developed as the early and spontaneous growth of natural disposition in those who are constitutionally of an intellectual temperament. This reflection is indeed suggested by an impression of some undefined similarity between the subject of this memoir, and the hon. Robert Boyle, who, in circumstances something similar, displayed a similarly inquisitive activity of observation, and readiness of intercourse and address, though, in him, combined with some more profound and sterner attributes of character. It is probable that here lord Charlemont first began to show that most engaging combination of conversational qualities that continued through life to win respect and affection for him, to an extent which we have not often to record. Here he formed an intimacy with the prince royal, who was his fellow-student, and received the most courteous attention from the king of Sardinia and the royal family. The Sardinian court was then the resort of persons eminent for their literature and science, and his lordship availed himself fully of the inestimable advantages which the intercourse of such men can only give, and which can only be fully imparted to those who are themselves competently endowed. Such an interval, to one whose taste and talents seem to have been so fitted to communicate and receive the fire of intellectual collision, must have been a school to fix and to complete the character in which he always after appears, and which was undoubtedly the character of his mind. Among others with whom he at this time formed an acquaintance, was Hume. It is

mentioned as a proof of his good sense and steadiness, that his religious principles had not been overturned by the infidel metaphysician. We cannot say that we attach much importance to such an indication: we cannot imagine Hume, who was much, and we believe deservedly, loved by his private friends, could have made it his ordinary practice to assail their faith; such an indiscretion would have soon thinned his circle of all its worthiest friends. There were unhappily everywhere minds enough to admire and seek out the infidel—there was in France, Italy, and even in England, ample range for unchecked sneers at Divine truth; but Hume was too much a gentleman in spirit, and of too amiable a temper, to assail the christianity of those who possessed any. He was too sagacious to be convinced by his own pre-eminently fallacious metaphysics. And assuredly his arguments, which he himself characterized as carrying no conviction,\* were not very likely to make any impression on the plain common sense of any one—not already an infidel. Mr Hardy's account of this period of his life contains some very highly interesting notices of the person and manners of Hume, with which we should be very anxious to ornament our memoir, were it not that having very much essential matter to narrate, we are compelled to confine our narrative within the least possible compass. Hume was then at Turin, as secretary to Sir John Sinclair, ambassador to the Sardinian court. "He had," writes lord Charlemont, "kindly distinguished me from among a number of young men who were then in the academy."

His lordship left Turin for Rome, October, 1748. He remained at Naples during the winter; and in the spring, with several English gentlemen, he sailed from Leghorn for Constantinople. On the 8th day of May, they came within sight of Messina, having passed "the poetical dangers of Scylla and Charybdis." As they approached the quay, a boat came alongside with the disagreeable intelligence, that they could not be suffered to enter the city until they should first have been examined by the officers of health. They were accordingly forced to remain for three hours on the naked beach, until the proper officers should arrive. At the end of this time, they were cautiously approached by the officials, and, from a safe distance, questioned about the port from which they came. When Leghorn was mentioned, their fear seemed in some degree abated, and they ventured more near, and assumed a more unreserved tone. The travellers were then directed to enter a little hut, into which when they were crowded, a bar was put up at about three feet from the ground, over which they were desired to leap. This was an easy feat to all but one corpulent gentleman, who, after many desperate efforts, with difficulty escaped from the severe infliction of a quarantine: such a trial was perhaps rather too indiscriminately applied to a corpulent person. The same gentleman seems indeed to have had a narrow escape from the vigilance of the officials; as upon a more severe inspection it would have been discovered that he was affected with a symptom which is common to the plague, and a different ailment under which he was then suffering. On entering Messina, a dreary scene of desolation

\* Hume's Essays.

presented itself; scarcely a passenger was to be seen on the grass-grown pavements of a splendid city, famed but a little before for its prosperity and populousness. The shops were shut, the palaces deserted. The plague had raged for three months, and in that city alone, carried off forty-seven thousand persons, not far from five-sixths of the entire population. These are a few main particulars taken from his lordship's forcible and affecting narrative; to which he added some just remarks which show both a reflecting and observing turn of mind.

Such a state of things could not be very inviting, and the party did not linger in this place of gloom and desolation, but hastened their departure by Malta and Smyrna, towards the Dardanelles. His lordship did not fail to perform the usual pilgrimage of taste to the Troad, and reached Constantinople, where he continued for a month in his wonted way, conversing freely with every one, and inquiring curiously about everything worth knowing. While here, he attained his twenty-first year, which he celebrated by an ode after the ordinary manner of imitating Horace, which was, we believe, a fashion among the scholars of his day. Mr Hardy has printed it; it indicates an elegant taste, though not much more. Some of the stanzas are written with ease, simplicity and terseness; others are marked by forced construction; and none display anything beyond the trite reflections which the subject has never failed to present; yet, compared with the average poetry of his day, we cannot conclude that lord Charlemont might not, as a mere literary man, have stood far above mediocrity. Where there is clear common sense and correct taste—the eminent qualities of his lordship—it is hardly credible how ideas accumulate, and fresh power may be developed in any direction, up to a certain point; and this point we would fix, in general, by the highest level reached by the same individual in other attainments of a kindred kind. These birth-day verses are addressed to Richard Marlay, afterwards bishop of Waterford, and always one of lord Charlemont's most especial friends.

He remained at Constantinople for a month, and then embarked for Egypt, visiting, on his way, Lesbos, Chios, Mitylene, Delos, and Paros—*niveamque Paron, sparsasque per aequor Cycladas*—looking at everything with that tasteful enthusiasm which filled his mind, and was among its most remarkable features. From Paros he reached Alexandria, and remained long enough in Egypt to see all its principal objects of curiosity and wonder. He then set sail for Cyprus, but was driven so far westward by a succession of cross-winds, that he was compelled to change his intention, and anchor in Rhodes. From this, after much tossing about, and some delightful landings and excursions, he reached Athens. From Athens he made several excursions, of which he wrote interesting accounts in his most graphic and lively style. Among the various adventures which he met was a tremendous tempest, of which he has given a detailed account, too long for insertion here, but not inferior in truth and terror to any of the many similar descriptions which we can remember. It was a Levanter, which commenced at noon, increased all day, and at night grew furious beyond



description. They were ignorant of their position in that dreadful night, having been for many days unable to take any observation, and imagined themselves to be driving up the formidable gulf of the Adriatic. The tempest still increased, and with it all those incidents of terror and desperate precaution so calculated to shake the landsman's heart. Among other awful casualties the cannon broke loose, and, with the ballast, came with a tremendous crash to the leeward, which nearly lay upon the water. "If the whole world," says his lordship, "should, by sudden explosion, be rent asunder, I question whether the shock would be greater to each individual than what was now felt in our little world. Every heart quaked with fear, and horror appeared in every countenance. The ship, weighed down by the shifting of her ballast, &c., was unable to right herself, and lay gunwale under water, at the mercy of the billows. In this awful situation, the only resource appears to have been one which was so hazardous, that the captain, when he stated what it was, added, 'I am an old sailor, and should fear to attempt it. But it is our only means of safety, and if there be a fellow among you brave enough'—here he was instantly interrupted by Tom Sillers, I never shall forget his name—who stood next to him; this truly, and, I may add, philosophically brave fellow, taking from his cheek the plug of tobacco, cried out, 'by G—, master, if we must die, 'tis better to die doing something.' His words accompanied his action." The danger was thus postponed. Having retired to bed, after an "hour's horrid uncertainty," the captain came to scare them with the information that "he feared all was over," and advised them to prepare for the worst. There was a momentary silence, which was singularly broken by an exclamation from Mr F. Burton,—“Well,” exclaimed this gentleman, “and, I fear,” writes lord Charlemont, “with an oath, this is fine indeed! Here have I been pampering this great body of mine for more than twenty years, and all to be a prey to some cursed shark, and be damned to him.” The “unexpected oddity” of this exclamation, at such a time, afforded a moment's mirth, on which perhaps fear itself was willing to seize as a brief respite. The ship's carpenter next appeared with the friendly design to reassure them: but his consolation had in it a serious qualification. The ship was, he said, sound; but there was, indeed, “one rotten plank, and that a principal one: let that hold and we are all safe!” It may easily be conceived how, as the noble writer says, their fancy turned on the rotten plank all night. During this long and dreadful night all was anticipation of the most revolting and terrific nature, added to no slight bodily suffering and injury. “Yet still,” writes his lordship, “we hoped—the principle of religion was active in our souls, and despair fled before it. Wo to the wretch, who, in such a situation, is destitute of this comfort.”

After much suffering, the sun rose, the wind fell, and the danger passed away. In a few hours more, land appeared; the joy was great, and this was still increased when they found that they had actually gained their intended port in the island of Malta. The quarantine of 40 days to which they were condemned, appeared as a trifle after such

danger so narrowly escaped. In ten days, however, they grew weary, and, petitioning the grand-master, had their probation shortened to 13 days more, at the end of which they landed.

At Malta, lord Charlemont was received with great and memorable consideration and civility; the established usages of the place were, in some respects set aside for the visitors. As an Irish peer he was received, according to etiquette, with his hat on. The grand-master, prohibited by usage from eating with them, joined the company when dinner was removed. Masked balls, long forbidden on account of the riots which they had occasioned, were renewed for their entertainment. In Malta, dissipation and luxury, and, consequently, vice of all descriptions were carried to the most extreme lengths. "The town of Malta is one vast brothel," was the pithy and comprehensive description of his lordship. The military monks, having no occupation but to live, and, bound by their vows to celibacy, compensated themselves by the lowest depths and latitudes of profligacy. Debauched themselves, they debauched the island. "Every woman, almost, is a knight's mistress, and every mistress intrigues with other men. Hither flock, as to an established mart for beauty, the female votaries of Venus from every distant region—Armenians, Jewesses, Greeks, Italians." From such a scene it was, perhaps, no small relief once more to feel themselves upon the sea.

On his return to Italy lord Charlemont renewed his acquaintance with the Sardinian court, and was present at the marriage of the young prince, who particularly requested his attendance. He had by this time attained so complete a mastery of the Italian tongue, that the natural graces of his conversation were set off to the utmost advantage, and a large accession of distinguished friends was added to his circle. Having next passed some time at Verona—where he was much cultivated by the Marchese Scipione Maffei—he proceeded to Rome, where he continued to reside two years, and was, says Mr Hardy, one of the earliest examples, among the English, of keeping house there. His housekeeping was superintended by Mr Murphy, whose learning won for him golden opinions among the *cicerones*. The arts and their professors came in for a large share of his lordship's attention, and several deserving English and some Italian artists were indebted to his bounty. He was of much service to Sir William Chambers, whose means were then small, and his acquaintance few. We cannot here even enumerate the cardinals and distinguished noblemen of every rank and country with whom he made acquaintance. Among these were the duc de Nivernois, who was the French ambassador at Rome, and the marquis of Rockingham, both constant friends in after years. He was also treated with affectionate, and almost parental kindness, by the reigning pope, Benedict XIV.

After leaving Rome, he revisited Turin and Florence, and made a short excursion in Spain. He then travelled through France, where he met with the same kindness as in the former places. We cannot now afford more space to this portion of his history than a very brief notice of his visit to the celebrated Montesquieu. This, too, we must, with some regret, abridge. Not wishing to return home without meeting so eminent a man, lord Charlemont and his friend, a Mr Elliott, having

arrived at Bourdeaux, wrote a joint letter to the president, expressive of their desires, and received a kind invitation in reply. They reached his villa next morning before he was up, having breakfasted on the way. On entering his library they found Ovid's *Elegies* open on the table, and, in the midst of their speculations on this discovery, the president walked into the room, and presented a person quite different from their expectations—a “gay, polite, sprightly Frenchman.” A walk was soon proposed to inspect the improvements of the villa, which its owner had laid out after the English style of landscape gardening. On this walk there occurred a characteristic scene, which we shall present in the noble author's own words. “Following him into the farm, we soon arrived at the skirts of a beautiful wood, cut into walks and paled round, the entrance to which was barricadoed with a moveable bar, about three feet high, fastened with a padlock. ‘Come,’ said he, searching in his pocket, ‘it is not worth our while to wait for the key, you, I am sure, can leap as well as I can, and this shall not stop me.’ So saying he ran at the bar, and fairly jumped over it; while we followed him with amazement, though not without delight, to see the philosopher likely to become our playfellow. This behaviour had exactly the effect which he meant it should have. He had observed our awkward timidity at his first accosting us, and was determined to rid us of it.” Among the incidents of the subsequent conversation, M. Montesquieu related a very singular trick which had, while he was in England, been played upon him by the duke of Montagu. “Only think of my first acquaintance with him, having invited me to his country seat before I had leisure to get into any sort of intimacy—he practised on me that singular trick which, undoubtedly, you have either experienced or heard of, under the idea of playing the play of introduction to ambassadors—he soused me over head and ears in a tub of cold water. I thought it odd, to be sure, but a traveller, as you well know, must take the world as it goes, &c.” They remained for three days—on their return to Bourdeaux they were accompanied thither by the president's secretary, whom they had, till then, taken to be a Frenchman, but now, to their surprise, he for the first time addressed them in English, and turned out to be an Irishman. They had, whether by design or accident, been thus exposed to a snare which they were perhaps glad to have escaped; and it was with a momentary sensation of an anxious nature, that they endeavoured to recall the occasional remarks which they had exchanged under covert of a language which they thought only understood by themselves. Montesquieu was at this time in his seventieth year. In their subsequent meetings with him, at Bourdeaux, they were no less astonished at his sprightly command of that species of small talk which was then so acceptable to women, and to French women in particular, than at his previous display of senile agility. Lord Charlemont mentions several other interesting particulars, for which we must be content to refer to Mr Hardy. Immediately after these incidents M. Montesquieu fell ill and died.

In June, 1754, lord Charlemont returned to Ireland, having passed upwards of eight years in foreign travel. He was, at this time, in his twenty-sixth year, and had attained to the full maturity of his



character and understanding, under that course of education most suited to his frame of mind. Good sense, a fine and discriminating sagacity, exercised by habitual observation, and the knowledge of men and manners, as well as the tact and address which such a mind with such accomplishments is nearly sure to attain, may be enumerated among the main features of his character. These acquirements were under the command of a moral temper, as pure from taint, and as lofty and noble in all its tendencies, as perhaps has been, or will be, the lot of mere humanity. Endowed with the most refined intellectual tastes, and the most endearing social affections,—and, if ever the ambiguous virtue of patriotism was unmingled with the base alloy of corrupt and selfish motives, in the breast of a public man, it was in his. We thus distinctly state our view of his character, because, from the point of his history at which we are arrived, he is to occupy a very prominent place in the history of Ireland, during its most busy and interesting period. From this, our memoir is to be the historical narrative of the time in which he was a leading actor on the public scene.

On his return he was created LL.D.; appointed governor of the county of Armagh; and obtained a seat in the Irish privy council.

A slight account of the state of Ireland, at the outset of his political life, will be here advantageous to preserve the historical chain of our narrative.

From the last popular commotion in the time of Swift, to the period now before us, there was a dull and torpid interval of public tranquillity. The Irish administration had, by art, influence, and the subordinate methods of intrigue, by the management of the public purse, and by the dexterous adjustment and counterpoise of factious interests gained and preserved an uncontested ascendancy in every department of the legislature. Though this superiority was uninterrupted by any public or ostensible outbreak of party, it was yet not maintained without heavy cost, and unremitting, though under-hand exertion. The great heads of the Irish aristocracy were haughty, turbulent of mood, and conscious of their value; they were indispensable accessaries to the policy of the castle, to be bought or flattered into compliance as the case might require. The revenue of the country, raised to the utmost limit of exaction, afforded the main fund for the support of this influence, and was freely lavished in pensions, and other methods of gratuity, among the dependents of those whom it was necessary to conciliate.

Such resources would, nevertheless, have been insufficient, were there not a multitude of private interests and prejudices which weighed upon the same side. It cannot be denied, that the Irish aristocracy at this time had long felt that their own influence and authority were inextricably linked with the supremacy of the English party and government. And while they preferred and cherished a purely native tenantry, as by far the most submissive and profitable, yet it was as obvious an expediency to keep them in that state in which they were most subservient and open to extortion. Thus, on consideration, it will be apparent that there was a considerable mass of conflicting motives at work in the tendency of the time. The Irish people, scanty in number, poor, and, to the lowest degree unimproved, were the submissive and willing serfs and drudges of the soil. This statement ought, however,

to be qualified by a consideration of their very low place then in the scale of civilization;—at that period they can only be considered as oppressed, insomuch that their improvement was totally unthought of. The English population, on the other hand, were in point of education, commercial advantage, and public spirit, more advanced and far less manageable: they were more formidable, and more the subject of a stringent and oppressive policy, under which they deeply murmured and repined. As for that high ascendancy of the English and protestant interests, of which a certain class of writers now so strongly speak, it is uniformly misrepresented. Between the protestant and Roman parties there was, of course, some opposition of feeling; in truth, such will be created by any imaginable distinction; but there was no animosity nor anything which might deserve the name of any popular sentiment. It was the ascendancy of England over Ireland—of the local and territorial interests of the one country over those of the other that was the object of castle policy, and often of national contest. This point is the more important to be set right, as there is not only injustice but ingratitude in the confusion; in the great contest for national rights and privileges, the battle of patriotism was fought and won by the descendants of the settlers—it was the *ascendancy* itself that supplied the strength and resolution which called up and imparted a free spirit to the volunteers. They were not only Englishmen by descent, but protestants by creed.

But, during this leaden interval, all had lain in silence under one spiritless level of subjection. The parliament was merely nominal; it simply served to give an air of legality to enactments which were virtually nothing less absolute than those edicts of the first Cæsars, in which the forms of the republic were preserved. The meetings of the houses were but formal; prayers were read; leave was given for the bishops to be covered; and a motion of adjournment ended the solemn farce. The return of a bill, from the English privy council, was only some shades less potential than the *grandis epistola* from Capua. By Poyning's law no bill could be passed until it was first approved by the lord-lieutenant and the Irish council; from the castle it was transmitted to the king in council, and, if approved of, it was returned back to the castle; most probably altered in such a manner as to frustrate wholly the original intent. It was then returned to the house—such at least was then the construction of Poyning's law. In addition to this strange mockery, the English commons, eager to enforce on Ireland certain commercial restraints and disabilities, had, in direct contravention to every law and treaty, and to the entire understanding between the two countries, declared their right to make laws to bind Ireland. Such a right was believed in by no one; but it was not felt for a long time to be worth disputing—nor can it be justly said, unless as a point of national pride, that it was of any serious moment. If, by accident, a spirited effort to contest the wishes of the administration, either by a passing emotion of patriotic feeling, an impulse of justice—or as sometime occurred where some partial interest broke the spiritless unanimity—the momentary storm soon blew over—the vote was sure to decide for government. The members were returned by a few; the common vice of the borough system had a substantial and extreme

existence in Ireland; and the few strings which moved the whole were in the hands of the king, or of his lieutenant. Men look to immediate objects for the government of their actions. Those who were not personally engaged in trade, failed to reflect on advantages and disadvantages which appeared but as the remote result of a circle of causes. The Irish aristocracy preferred the influence they possessed with government, with the added importance they gained by patronage and power, to a prosperity which would so largely have reverted to themselves.

From such unhappy causes it was, that for the better part of a century, Ireland was excluded from all trade with the British colonies. She was not allowed to export to English ports, those articles which she was best enabled to raise—her cattle, and raw material of every description. To such an extent was the jealousy of the English graziers excited, that a duty equivalent to a prohibition was laid upon the importation of her wool.

The penal laws affecting the members of the church of Rome were grievous, and, had they been enforced, intolerably severe. This severity was, however, then totally unfelt; nor on this score was there in fact any complaint: these statutes lay generally dormant, and unless on one or two occasions of alarm, resulting from popular excitement, were not even thought of. The statute of 1699 was, indeed, the mere result of intrigue, and not even intended by any party. It was projected by a faction, in the hope to make king William unpopular, by compelling him to pass a bill conceived in so extreme a spirit of severity, that it was deemed a matter of course that it should be rejected in England. So paltry a stratagem was seen through and retorted on the contrivers—the English counsellors of king William added, as they considered, new absurdities, and sent them back their bill, with leave to pass it. Both parties for some time continued to play this wretched game, in which the strife was, not who should have the infamy of passing, but who should incur the odium of rejecting it. The English court, as we learn from bishop Burnet, was reluctant to be severe beyond what was deemed indispensable, and, while it desired to avoid passing this enactment, at the same time fully comprehended that they might experience much difficulty in obtaining such a measure of coercion as was yet considered essential to the peace of Ireland. They were not unwilling to throw the burthen of passing this law on those whom they knew had no desire to bring in any law upon the subject. And thus it was that, after being tossed back and forward for some time, it was passed in the heat of party-contest actually to the surprise of all. So far as it is here considered, there was a further consequence; this act, of 1699, was deficient in several clauses necessary to give it practical operation. Its application, so far as that extreme provision, which incapacitated the popish heir, only gave a right of action to the protestant next of kin, of which neither shame nor safety would permit any one to avail himself. And if the next of kin stood aside, the right was not thereby transferred further—his dormant claim was a security against every one else. In cases of sudden excitements which awakened suspicion of the renewal of the ancient plots among the papal communion, still not quite effaced



from the fears of the then living generation—some acts of personal severity occurred in the panic of the moment, which would have most probably occurred without any law. But these unhappy incidents were not looked upon by any class as hard or severe, though afterwards admirably serving the purpose of party rhetoric. Suspicions which were not actually verified by any present occasion, were then thought to be justified by the past. They were, at worst, incidental cases of severity; and the free spirit, to which they would have been shocking and intolerable, had no existence save in the breasts of a few. "The test," says Burnet, "relating to matters of doctrine and worship, did not seem a proper ground for so great a severity; so this act was not followed, nor executed in any sort." This act, as to its operation, was dormant; and, though in a more advanced state of civil progress, it would have been resented even for the insult alone; no such sentiment could then exist. At the time there was no public, at least no popular, discontent on such grounds. Among the few Irish gentlemen who were actuated by any sense of public spirit, it was enumerated occasionally among other subjects of grievance.

Such was the general condition of Irish politics in 1755, when lord Charlemont came over; and the country was not merely in this depressed and impoverished condition, but, by the necessary reaction of such a state of things on human feeling, its interests were generally regarded as of no importance, but by those whom they immediately affected. As Swift wrote to Bolingbroke with a truth, which in our times may only pass for wit, "the truth is, we never had leisure to think of that country while we were in power:" the sentence carries a reflection on the patriotism of Swift too severely true for the play of fancy; and it may be generally applied to the patriotism of the gloomy interval between the revolution and the date at which we have arrived. The Irish patriot was only such for the ordinary purpose of opposition—the struggle for place or power, and the conflict of personal interests.

The character of lord Charlemont was such as to awaken ready confidence, both in his good sense and disinterestedness; and an occasion soon offered for the exercise of this influence. Mr Boyle, the speaker of the House of Commons and primate Stone, had engaged in a trial of strength; and, as the primate was one of the main supports of the Irish government, the speaker took the side of opposition; the question on which they tried their rival strength related to a surplus of the Irish revenue, amounting to £200,000, the right to dispose of which was disputed between the crown and the Irish commons. The speaker was possessed of talent, and of an influence in elections more extensive than any other individual at that time possessed; his opposition was likely to retard and embarrass the Irish government. The question which was thus raised was warmly contested by the parties: it was carried in opposition to government, by an ineffective resolution of the Irish commons; the government applied the money according to its own discretion. A conflict of such a nature, and conducted by such means, was nevertheless highly embarrassing to the government; the right of taxation was one of those questions which there was on both sides of the water, the utmost reluctance to have raised; the English government

had observed the utmost caution on the subject, for while the right of taxation was asserted by them, they uniformly abstained from its exercise. The topic thus introduced by the speaker, was therefore, it will be seen, in the higher degree embarrassing. The English ministry perceived the difficulties to which they might be exposed—they feared the opposition of the speaker, and they disliked the support of the primate. To extricate themselves, their first step was to send over the marquess of Hartington, son to the duke of Devonshire. This nobleman was highly popular in Ireland, where both the property of his family and his personal qualifications were sure to give him weight and influence. It was now thought necessary to adopt the expedient of bringing the parties together, and to effect a personal reconciliation. Lord Charlemont, who was related to the speaker, undertook this task, and was successful. He effected the desired object, and, according to Mr Hardy, “the wheels of government moved on as before.”

Connected with this affair there was another negotiation to which he had no privy; and which is only here to be stated for the impulse which it seems to have imparted to his political sentiments, for the rest of his life. A private treaty was entered upon between the refractory leaders and the government, by which it was agreed, that the primate was to have his share of power, “though not at that time, yet at no distant period;” and, that Mr Boyle, the speaker, should have the rank and title of an earl, with £3000 a-year for thirty-one years. On these occurrences lord Charlemont’s reflections are quoted by his biographer—we think them characteristic—“and this was the first instance that occurred to me among many thousands to which I was afterwards witness, that the mask of patriotism is often assumed to disguise self-interest and ambition; and that the paths of violent opposition are too frequently trod, as the nearest and surest road to office and emolument.”\*

The question which had been brought forward from motives such as are thus described, had really all the importance attributed to it by the government; and is not without much reason looked on as the first impulse which gave motion to a popular spirit, which had, till then, lain asleep. The process by which such incidents may have an operation very disproportionate in magnitude to their apparent origin, is well known, and we have at some length dwelt upon it in our prefatory chapter.† A period of tranquillity, under circumstances seemingly the least favourable, will yet be productive of the irrepressible and ever-springing tendencies of progress. For two generations of political torpor, the population was increasing, and ideas were, however slowly, making their way downward. The gentry and the mercantile classes, which in reality constituted the public, were likewise advanced in wealth, the arts of life, intelligence, and numbers. A growing sense of self-assertion grew with their strength; and had there been a sagacious eye to mark the indications of public feeling and opinion—which is seldom heeded until it starts into some attitude of strength—it would have been discerned that there were elements afloat, and moving into states of combination, which only wanted the impulse to become agents of revolutionary movement.

\* Hardy’s Life, &c., p. 49.

† Introduction, pp. 112, 113.

And thus it was, as has been often remarked by several who lived and wrote in that period, that the contest between Mr Boyle the speaker and primate Stone, awakened a spirit that never again subsided until it manifested itself in the most remarkable events and acts of our history. It was not, it is well observed by Mr Hardy, a mere commotion of the populace, like those tumultuary excitements, caused by the Drapier's Letters; but it was an open, full, and spirited discussion which burst in upon the torpor of the Irish parliament, like a breeze upon a stagnant sea, which awakes the billows of its power, and disturbs the reptiles which float upon its torpid level. The patriotism of some was excited,—the indignation and sense of wrong of many; such discussions, never confined to the speakers, or to the walls of parliament, ran through all the circles of connexion and dependency; and the spirit of controversy was widely roused upon a question more nearly affecting the pride than the purses of the public. The well-oiled wheels of government went on smoothly when restored to their wonted motion in the customary channels; but an impulse was propagated onward into futurity. We shall presently come to the first serious indication of the latent power thus awakened.

Lord Hartington became duke of Devonshire by the death of his father. In 1756, he left the government of Ireland, and was succeeded by John, duke of Bedford. He had always preserved the most kindly intercourse with lord Charlemont, and, without any solicitation, had presented his brother with a cornetcy of dragoons—the only favour which lord Charlemont ever received from the castle, to which any emolument was attached. By this nobleman lord Charlemont's high and independent spirit was appreciated fully but justly—he was looked upon as one from whom opposition was as a matter of course to be anticipated. He still preserved the respect due to his rank and character; though ready to resist the government, he cared not to court the people, and was no more to be bribed from his sense of right, by low adulation, than by flattery in high places,—a distinction in his case, the more to be insisted upon, because the man who pursues a popular course, at the dictate of the most genuine sense of duty or love of his country, can hardly escape the imputation of having looked for the popularity which he is likely to win.

In the latter end of the reign of queen Anne, there had been some attempts on the part of the English house of peers to interfere with the judicial privileges of the Irish peers, who, on their part, resisted the encroachment by resolutions. But soon after the accession of George I., a more decided course was adopted by the English parliament, which brought in a bill to maintain the dependence of Ireland upon the British crown, in which the Irish lords were deprived of their judicature as a court of appeal; and the English parliament was expressly declared competent to legislate for Ireland. This was universally and deeply felt by every Irish gentleman, not actually in the pay of government, to be a heavy insult and grievance; but the spirit to resist was wanting; such sentiments were yet isolated in the breast of individuals, and it was evident to ordinary discretion, that it was unsafe to bring on questions which are sure to bring only a confirmation of wrong, and a firmer rivetting of restraints.



As a peer, lord Charlemont entertained a deep and impatient sense of this injustice to his country, and insult to his order; and, while yet a very young man, and not perhaps withheld by any very prudential forecast, he determined to bring it to the test. No one considered the English statute,—which really begged the question of right—to be in the least binding; its validity was evidently involved in the question it pretended to settle; and every one understands how much more keenly the sense of wrong is felt when the sense of reason is at the same time offended. Lord Charlemont came to a resolution, either by a real or fictitious suit, to bring this question of jurisdiction before the legislature; and, there is little doubt but the Irish lords would have found such an appeal very embarrassing, although it is as certain that they would have found reasons far more influential on the other side: it was therefore so far fortunate at the time, that a fit of illness, followed by a long interval of very delicate health, interfered. “When more advanced in years,” says Mr Hardy, “he used to speak of this illness rather as a fortunate one; for the house of lords, as he discovered, would not have entertained his suit.” We must, however, say, that we have some doubts on this point: the commons were not quite asleep—though, it must be allowed, not far from it—questions of less moment had been found to rouse their spirit, and the lords would have hesitated finally to admit, that they were bound by a statute of the English parliament. But the hour of trial was not yet come. “Neither Grattan nor Flood were then in parliament, nor if they were, would parliament have encouraged them. My splendid, but boyish scheme, fell therefore to the ground,” was the comment of his lordship in later times. The illness, which is mentioned by his lordship, was probably the same which he experienced in 1757, and which invalidated him until 1760: his recovery he attributed to the skill and attention of Lucas.

With the duke of Bedford, lord Charlemont maintained a courteous and even cordial acquaintance, though not the same friendly intimacy which had subsisted between him and lord Hartington. The duke was zealous in preserving the English interest, and at first—acting under that ignorance of Irish affairs, which has always, but chiefly then, characterized the English councils—he was more uncompromising in trifles than he afterwards became, when a native sense of justice tempered his conduct, and induced him to take more comprehensive and liberal views of the rights of the people than had previously been adopted.

Among the earliest acts of the duke of Bedford, there was one which was very much adapted to raise unfavourable anticipations in Ireland. In the first year of his administration, on the 1st of November, a resolution was passed by the commons that “the pensions and salaries placed on the civil establishment in Ireland, since the 23d of March, 1755, amounted to the annual sum of £28,103; that several of such pensions were granted for long and unusual terms, and several to persons not resident in the kingdom; that granting so much of the public revenue in pensions was an improvident disposition of the revenue, an injury to the crown, and detrimental to the kingdom.” It was ordered that the house should wait upon the lord-lieutenant, and

request that his excellency would transmit this resolution to the king. The duke demurred, and said he could not at once determine the propriety of acceding. Two days after, the house resolved "that all orders should be adjourned until the house should receive an answer from the lord-lieutenant." At this decided step, the secretary (Mr Rigby) was alarmed, and next day brought a message from the duke that the resolution of the 1st Nov. should be transmitted forthwith. Such facts, while they may help to illustrate the effect of extreme and hasty counsels, also show the existence of a formidable element of resistance, which cannot be too far seen and computed by statesmen. But such a concession was itself of deep importance in giving added impulse to the under-tone of nationality which compelled it. The duke of Bedford acted under the influence of the primate and Mr Rigby; to these, at least, his policy was attributed by lord Charlemont; his character has been exalted by praise which may well outweigh volumes of factious sarcasm; but the reader will perhaps recollect the terrific scalping of Junius, in his letter "To the duke of Bedford," some years after the time at which he now appears before us. Mr Rigby's name will also bring to remembrance some sentences that are not easily forgotten. Rigby was well known for his convivial talents, and was perhaps more honourably appreciated in the circles of Irish hospitality than as a servant of the administration. But it need not be said that there was a very wide distinction between the government politics in the two countries, and that an enlightened English nobleman, whatever were his party views, could not fail quickly to discern that the policy maintained towards Ireland was not in unison with the principles of any existing party or creed; there was not in England; there was not even in Ireland, any class of men whose views were then identified with the Irish privy council. He could not fail to discover a fact—since too little observed in the obscurity of that time, and in the heat of subsequent animosities—that the stern policy of the Irish government was the counsel of a small knot of powerful individuals. Though the recollections of history unquestionably were such as to suggest fears from the papal church in Ireland, as elsewhere; yet, practically, no prepossession then prevailed, to any extent, against them. Nor were their numbers, wealth, or importance, at the time, such as to work on the fears or animosities of any but a few, whose immediate interests involved some such sentiment. We are not here questioning the foundation for such sentiments, had they existed to any extent, but simply stating the fact, that the English population, or, more properly speaking, the protestant population in Ireland, were full of the most kindly sympathies toward their Romish brethren, and that there was a universal abhorrence against the iniquitous policy of the statutes which we have already noticed in the foregoing narrative. Of course, it must be understood that a powerful faction, however small in number, must be surrounded by a cloud of partisans, composed of those who are ignorant, those who are paid, and those whose private interests are concerned.

The duke was generally considered as actuated by the most unfavourable impressions; his peculiar politics, and the hereditary bias which Irishmen are so liable to feel and to impute, were considered by

the popular party in Ireland as boding no good. "Greatly," says Mr Hardy, "were such persons disappointed in the conduct of the duke of Bedford; and equally, though agreeably, disappointed were the catholics, in feeling the first rays of a more expanded protection beam on them from a quarter where they least expected it." On this Mr Hardy applies Virgil's lines—

"Via prima salutis,  
Quod minime reris, Graia pandetur ab urbe."

Mr Hardy, were he now alive, might easily find in recent events far more striking applications for the same quotation. We are not, nevertheless, quite sure of the propriety of its application to an English whig nobleman, even though lord-lieutenant of Ireland.

There was during the duke of Bedford's administration a very prevalent rumour of a legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, though it does not very plainly appear from what quarter it proceeded. Mr Hardy conjectures that it arose from some convivial suggestion of Mr Rigby, who indulged much in social intercourse; and, from the constitution of town society at that period, such a hint, he supposes, would quickly spread. It is not improbable that it was a feeler—a straw thrown upon the wind of rumour; if so the indication was not doubtful, as great murmurs of discontent generally agitated the town; and the matter was presently forgotten.

We do not think it necessary to dwell at any length upon an event which occurred at this time, and created something of more serious alarm—the landing of 600 French in Carrickfergus bay. A more serious invasion was notoriously intended, but the victory of lord Hawke intercepted a squadron, which, with 18,000 men, had been destined for this expedition. Three frigates, however, entered that bay on the 21st Feb., 1760. There cannot be attached any very serious importance, under any circumstances, to so small a force landed in the North; but the little mischief they might have effected was prevented by the folly of the gentleman who commanded the expedition. His second in command, M. Thurot, a clever officer, who knew the country well, proposed a rapid descent upon Belfast; but M. Flobert, a disciple of the old school, could not conceive the propriety of leaving behind them a fortified city like Carrickfergus. The garrison was on parade, and there seems—notwithstanding a notice sent from the castle, of the probable expectation of such an event—to have been no kind of preparation: the officer on duty and his men thought the vessels to be English, and twelve boats were seen conveying armed men to Kilroot point before they guessed the truth. The French landed, and, with their usual expertness, availed themselves of hedge and ditch to advance securely. The commandant was, in the mean time, apprized of the circumstances, and the gates and avenues were guarded. The French came on and were received with a fire, which checked their advance, from a company which was advantageously posted for the purpose while they had been advancing. These had, however, but a few rounds of ammunition, which were expended in the first discharges, and they retired before the French, into the town. The French attacked both the north and south gates, and a warm fire continued for some



time. Between the two fires the gates were battered open; the garrison, too, had spent their store of ball, and when the firing slackened, the French attacked the gates sword in hand. They were here, however, repulsed after a very severe but rather tumultuary struggle, in which their opponents mainly consisted of the gentlemen of the town, and a few of the people, with colonel Jennings, lord Wallingford, captain Bland, lieutenant Ellis. In this struggle sticks and stones were not the least effective weapons; and this small party fought with such desperate zeal that the French, with all their cool discipline, were compelled to retire from the gate. The gate stood open with its brave defenders in front outside. They now consulted; a sally was urged—we presume by the townsmen—but colonel Jennings saw the hopelessness of resistance with his small garrison, destitute as they were of ammunition—the gates not tenable, and a breach of fifty paces in the wall: a parley was beaten, and verbal articles easily agreed upon. The garrison was permitted to march out with the honours of war. The castle was to receive no injury, and the city was not to be injured or plundered. In the mean time the alarm was diffused, and M. Thurot who perfectly understood the danger of remaining until a force could be collected, embarked and put to sea, leaving behind M. Flobert and a few men, who were too severely wounded for removal.\*

On the very first intimation of these occurrences, Lord Charlemont, who was governor of Antrim, hurried off to his post, but was only time enough to receive those who had remained as prisoners. And it is mentioned by Mr Hardy that the French expressed great delight on meeting a person to whom they could express their distresses in their own language. He entered with his wonted humanity into their grievances, and obtained for them accommodations which they could not otherwise have had any hope of. M. Flobert is described as a man of strange character; he obtained leave to go to London, and requested permission to accompany lord Charlemont, who readily consented. M. Thurot had scarcely put to sea when he was intercepted by captain Elliot of H. M. ship *Æolus*, with two other ships, the *Pallas* and the *Brilliant*, which had for some days watched his movements, but were prevented by weather from entering the bay. An engagement ensued, and, after an hour and a half, the French vessels struck their colours. The entire force of every description in the captured vessels amounted to 1245, of which perhaps 800 may have been military.

The fact which most deserves the reader's attention in this, otherwise not very consequential event, is the general zeal shown by every class of the northern public; a universal spirit of resistance called up large bodies of the peasantry, armed as chance directed, and, had the exigency required, there can be little doubt that a formidable force must have been speedily assembled by the magistrates and country gentlemen, even though the government had been remiss. It was, most probably, the evidence of hostility thus shown that mainly induced the French to retire. In the first project of the expedition there can be little doubt that a reliance on the old and well-known

\* Official letter by major-general Strode.

disaffection of the peasantry had been an element of the calculation. Thurot, though compelled (it is asserted) to put in by stress of weather, must, nevertheless, when he presumed to land, have calculated on the same consideration. But memorably different, indeed, was the result, and we have thought proper here to call attention to it as the early indication of the same spirit, which, from the same place, was, in a few years more, to produce results of a nature so critical in the fortunes of the nation. Lord Charlemont has himself left an interesting account of what he witnessed on his arrival in Belfast—we give this as extracted by Mr Hardy from his lordship's private papers. "The appearance of the peasantry who had thronged to its defence [the city of Belfast] many of whom were my own tenants, was singular and formidable. They were drawn up in regular bodies, each with its own chosen officers, and formed in martial array; some few with old firelocks, but the greater number armed with what is called in Scotland the Lochaber axe—a scythe fixed longitudinally to the end of a long pole—a desperate weapon, and which they would have made a desperate use of. Thousands were assembled in a small circuit; but these thousands were so thoroughly impressed with the necessity of regularity, that the town was perfectly undisturbed by tumult, by riot, or even by drunkenness."

In 1760, the duke of Bedford returned to England, and on the 12th of October, in the same year, George II. died; and a new reign properly commences this present division of our history.

The duke was succeeded by lord Halifax. With him, as secretary, came over the celebrated William Gerrard Hamilton, of whom we shall hereafter, when writing the life of Edmund Burke, offer some notice. Lord Charlemont first introduced Burke to his acquaintance, an incident to which Mr Hardy attributes Mr Burke's subsequent rise—on this, too, we have some remarks to make in due season.

The marriage of George III. was the next event which brings lord Charlemont conspicuously and most honourably forward. Many of the Irish peeresses who were in town had prepared to walk in their order at the royal nuptials, when, to their surprise, they received a notification from the duchess of Bedford to apprise them that they were to be excluded from the entire ceremonial. This most unnecessary insult could not be tacitly endured by the ladies of Ireland; and, according to Mr Hardy, they applied to lord Charlemont,—a compliment, than which a higher cannot well be imagined. Their selection was, indeed, sagacious, and well approved by his conduct on the occasion. With the prompt spirit which marks every portion of his life, he zealously entered into the insulted feelings of his fair countrywomen, and went the round of the Irish peerage then in town, to rouse their sense of shame, and obtain the advantage of their concert and influence, in a matter nearly concerning their honour. His mission was so far vain, and he had doubtless to accuse himself of "moving such a dish of skimmed milk to so honourable an action;" in more instances than one. It is, indeed, hard to avoid thinking that Mr Hardy may have had very inadequate information: the habitual subserviency of the Irish peerage of that day is hardly sufficient to account for so abject a renunciation of a right, which it was not very

just even to allow to depend on court precedent. No etiquette should, for a moment, be tolerated in the decision of a question which ought to have been felt to involve the real relation between the king and his Irish peerage. Lord Charlemont, after encountering the pain and the disgust of this recreant exhibition, at last found an ally in the lord Middleton.\* With this nobleman he visited lord Halifax at his seat in Bushy-park, and stated the matter to his lordship. This nobleman, whose proper duty it should have been to interfere as lord-lieutenant of Ireland, gave a courteous reception to their statement, and immediately waited on the king, to whom he submitted the claim of the Irish ladies. The king could only have met such a statement in one way, and entered at once with the natural grace and kindness of his disposition into their feelings. It was answered, in consequence, to lord Charlemont, that a privy council was to sit on the next day, which should consider the claim which he advanced, and he was desired to have precedents in readiness for their consideration. Here again rose a most serious embarrassment; about precedents he knew nothing, and had no more than a few hours to make the necessary inquiries; the remainder of the day was spent in vain deliberation, but late at night (as we conjecture from Mr Hardy's statement) he fortunately recollected lord Egmont, then well known for his intimacy with heraldic lore.† It may be presumed that it was after a restless night that he knocked early next morning at that lord's door, and was introduced into his chamber before he had as yet risen from his bed. Happily, lord Egmont was full and satisfactory upon the subject of his inquiries, and undertook to furnish the required precedents in writing, which he did on the spot. These were instantly forwarded to lord Halifax, by whom they were submitted to the council, and excited an angry opposition, which may help to show the contempt which at that time lay upon Ireland. It is not easy to say with certainty what might have been the decision of a cabinet council, in which so pertinacious an opposition was exerted, but king George acted with the equitable decision for which the occasion evidently called, and cut short the paltry conflict of the lowest display which human pride admits of, by ordering that the Irish nobility should walk according to their ranks at the ceremonial. To complete the service thus rendered to his countrywomen, and, through them, to Ireland, and, as it must easily appear, to the two kingdoms, lord Charlemont exerted himself to prevail on many of the Irish nobility to take the places thus confirmed to them, and then took due care to have their names inserted in the ceremonial.

During the administration of lord Halifax, commenced those popular factions, the Whiteboys, Hearts of Oak, &c., with which the progress of Ireland has, until very recent times, been so fatally encumbered. In the previous course of history for several hundred years, the political disturbances of Ireland had assumed the pretext of religion. But at this time the main causes of popular discontent were

\* George Brodrick, 3d viscount Middleton of Middleton, in the county of Cork.

† Lord Egmont had written a book on the rights of the Irish Peerage.



of a kind far more adapted to come home to the peasant's bosom; the tyranny and selfishness of the landlords appeared in the most shameful extortion. The origin of the Whiteboys is thus explained:—In Munster, several of the landlords having set their lands at an exorbitant rent, endeavoured to conciliate the tenants by allowing them the commonage of certain waste lands. They afterwards enclosed these lands. The people had recourse to violence. As the nature of such violence is to accumulate force and fury, extensive outrages were committed. The gentry, unable to suppress the spirit they had raised, had the dexterity to give it a safe direction. When the rabble were once organized, and a system of outrage began, the sectarian zeal, which is never far behind when mobs are congregated from any cause, was easily turned upon the protestant clergy. The landlords themselves, as ready to oppress the clergy as the people, gladly seized on the pretext, which helped both to raise a prejudice against the ministers of a religion which they professed to follow, and which helped to conceal the real causes. The Whiteboys were suppressed; but neither was the cause removed, nor the angry spirit calmed. Other disturbances arose in the north. The roads were made and kept in repair by the housekeepers—the labour of six days in the year was exacted from man and horse—and a general complaint, mainly excited by the severity of overseers, at last broke out in violence. The peasantry had been additionally exasperated by the common feeling that those roads were not generally for the public convenience, but more generally for the convenience of the landlords: they were called *job roads*. One parish openly refused to make any more; the contagion spread, and soon extended over the province. Having commenced in real grievances, with the ordinary rapidity of popular passion they soon went on to imaginary complaints, and the general redress of wrongs. The tithes next, and then, in due course, the rents, became the object of their wisdom. A little bloodshed suppressed the north, as it had done the south. The northern discontents had, nevertheless, arisen on grounds less obnoxious to landlords, and they were taken into consideration in the ensuing session of parliament. The old act was repealed, and, by a more equal burthen, a new provision made for the roads.

In the course of the next few years, other similar risings took place. Those which we have here more especially noticed, are now chiefly important to impress the consideration so apt to be overlooked in the two opposite aspects of Irish party feeling; first, that the general tendency to popular insubordination, manifested on various occasions, from the time of which we speak to far more recent periods, were essentially unconnected with religious feeling; while, at the same time, they generally assumed that character to a sufficient extent to justify the prejudices, which, connecting present and past events, assigned them the character they took upon themselves. The wisdom of party is not responsible for nice distinctions. When a popular faction, or its advocates, assume a character for their purposes, they lose the right of coming into court and pleading that such was not their character.

These statements may help to set in a clear light the opinions which were then unfavourable to the Roman church in this country. It may

be understood why a class, looking with an indiscriminate eye on the past, saw only the dangerous organization under the influence of a foreign cabinet, so often ostentatiously pretended, and so often effectively manifested in former days. And also, why even the utmost extent of liberality went no further than the wish to ease the upper ranks of that church from the pressure of a law at once insulting, inconvenient, and ineffective for any of its intended purposes. It may thus be understood how it was that the well-known liberality of lord Charlemont went no further than this limited view, while he considered it impolitic in any way to relax the laws which excluded the same classes from those professions which were the only resources for the younger sons of the gentry. The general consequence was, that the only resource left for them was foreign service; and of this the evil consequences had, in the previous century, been made very apparent by the rebellion of Sir Phelim O'Neale, which, as we have already related, was mainly organized abroad, and, in the first instance, carried into effect by Irishmen trained in the Spanish service. These considerations were now taken by the wrong end. The remedy of such an evil, supposing it still to have existence, would appear to be most effectively sought in the redress of the grievance of which it was the necessary result; but a different view seems to have presented itself to the government. An application was made by the Portuguese government for aid from England. The plan was formed to allow six Irish regiments to be raised and taken into the Portuguese service. It was proposed by secretary Hamilton, in that celebrated speech which has acquired for its speaker the title of "single-speeched," and thus carried down to posterity the impression that he never spoke but once.\* The measure was strongly opposed, on the ground of the danger which, it was alleged, must arise from the arming and training so large a number of the members of the papal church. The motion failed. It may help to elucidate the position which we are anxious to place in the fullest force,—that there was a weight of old prepossession still adding its effective weight to other causes, which have been too hastily, and somewhat invidiously, placed alone in the discussion of ancient grievances. Condemning with our whole force all intolerance and political exclusiveness, on every abstract ground, we shall, at every stage of our history, not fail to mark out the distinctions which are confused by party, for purposes which cannot be justified. Up to a certain point, (now easy to fix with some accuracy,) the exclusion from political power of a large class, can be demonstrated as absolutely essential, on every ground which is available for the proof of any political right. That the general prepossession which grew out of such a state of things will necessarily long survive the necessity from which it originated, is a proposition as deeply founded in human nature, as the former in sound political theory, need not be proved. The sentiment existing at that period in favour of protestant ascendancy, so far from being liable to the ignorant aspersion of modern partisans, was then as fixed in the

\* "Never," says Mr Hardy, "had such an oration been uttered within those walls."

reason of the age as any law of nature. It was sternly held by the most liberal politicians who had any pretension to honesty or moderation, and was even admitted by the more informed and better ranks of that class, upon whom it fell with such apparent severity. We have lingered a little in our narrative at this point, that we may express our views freely on the subject of liberty and toleration, without being supposed by any reader to have adopted the fallacies or extreme notions of that liberalist faction, with whose language and sentiments we must often for the future be found partially coincident. And we must entreat to have it kept in view, that in such cases the only resource we have against the appearance of inconsistency, is in those comprehensive distinctions which vindicate the fact, that we are endeavouring to steer as free as we can between both of the great public parties who have engaged on the same field. We shall here quote a sentence written by lord Charlemont—not that we agree with its whole purport, but because it exhibits the real opinion of his age, free from every stain of private interest or factious tendency—"The situation of the catholic gentry of Ireland was at this time truly deplorable. The hostile statutes enacted against them, however their necessity may have ceased, were still unrepealed, and respecting devise and inheritance, they laboured under the greatest hardships. In time, however, it might be hoped that these difficulties would be palliated, or perhaps removed; but they were subject to one inconvenience, which seemed to be so interwoven with the existence of a protestant interest and government, that sound policy, and, indeed, necessity, must for ever prevent its being remedied." Here, then, is the whole liberal creed of that day, in its length and breadth, and in its most respectable form.

The immediate interval of Irish history, on which we have hitherto been led to dwell, is that which historians have generally seen reason to pass with slight notice, as deficient in interest, and not marked by important events. From such an estimate we see no great reason to dissent; we have, nevertheless, selected some details, with a view to convey some distinct notion of the calm, or perhaps torpor, which preceded a period unparalleled for the interest and rapid succession of the passions by which it was agitated, and the events it brought forth. Within the stagnant interval thus described, one event occurred, which may be regarded as the beginning of another order of things, and as the first step of a revolution, the greatest which happened in the fortunes of Ireland from the invasion of Strongbow. To this we shall at once pass.

From time to time, as has appeared, ineffectual efforts were made to remedy the main defects in the legal constitution of Ireland. They were always defeated with uniform facility by the vigilance of the Irish administration. The enormous pension-list was a standing subject of complaint—the independence of the judges was another primary object of vain contest—and, in 1765, this latter subject was introduced with increased spirit, but with the old result. It was felt that the opposition was rather gaining, than losing ground in the contest for objects to which, after every disappointment, they still more pertinaciously returned. It was also probably regarded as no



unimportant advantage, that at this period two of their most formidable antagonists were removed from the scene. The Irish administration was deprived of the ability of two consummate managers of party—primate Stone and lord Shannon—who both died in December, 1764.

Till this time the Irish commons held their seats for the life of the king—an extreme from which the unconstitutional influence of the crown was an immediate and evident consequence. It amounted virtually to an entire separation of interest between the representation and the people. In proportion as the constituency began to obtain a real existence, such an evil would also grow into increased effect, and begin to be more and more felt: and such an indication of political vitality at this time was beginning to grow very apparent and very troublesome to the government. Of all measures that could well be conceived, the limitation of parliaments would strike most directly and closely at the root of corrupt power. In 1765, under the administration of lord Hertford, there was much activity displayed by county meetings through the kingdom, in which numerous resolutions and addresses to this effect were carried. In Dublin, a meeting of the citizens published a declaration, and instructed the city members to unite in this paramount and fundamental effort.

The history of this important and influential measure is curious, as related in some detail by the earl of Charlemont. Some doubts have been expressed as to these details, but we do not participate in these doubts, and shall notice here some incidents of a preliminary nature, which may have contributed much to the events which followed; so much, indeed, that they might well seem (what we would not absolutely affirm) to be the consistent parts of the same manœuvre. Providence worked favourably for Ireland. In the previous year the Irish commons had shown a very unusual degree of jealousy on the right of altering their bills, assumed by the British council; they had entered into a resolution that no bill should pass in their house until a committee appointed for that purpose should first have compared the bill returned with the original heads, and report if there were any, and what alterations. Again, acting on this resolution, with a pertinacity which did not spare even their own most anxious wishes, in 1767, after they had prepared and transmitted the heads of a most important bill to secure the independence of the judges, when it was returned they rejected it after such a comparison. It is therefore, on viewing these premises, very strongly apparent that their conduct, under almost any circumstances, would be counted on with some confidence by the British privy council; and, farther, it is also apparent that, if the British cabinet really desired to pass any measure through the Irish commons, that they would have taken due care not to raise so visible an obstacle to their success. Respecting the particular measure here under consideration, it was generally understood that a majority of the Irish members themselves had no great desire for a measure, which, being in a very high degree popular, was in a manner forced upon them from without. With these unfavourable dispositions on both sides, we shall now state the account given in Mr Hardy's narration.

The measure of abridging the duration of parliaments having been ineffectually and insincerely entertained, first, in 1761, was now, in 1767, under the administration of lord Townshend, taken up with more earnestness. The commons had been sorely pressed with the reproaches of the people; and, galled by numerous writings and public discussions, calculated to render them unpopular, they now once more took up the question, and transmitted the heads of a bill for the limitation of parliament to seven years. The privy council, actuated by what motives the reader may infer, changed it to eight years, and returned it so changed to Ireland. Contrary to the general expectation, and to the consternation of many, it passed. It was still hoped that it would be cashiered in the Irish privy council; and it is apparent that some such design was entertained. The bill was detained for two sessions; but the facts had transpired, and were become known to the public, and the clamour was long, loud, and irresistible. The rest may be conveyed in a story told by lord Charlemont. "He happened," writes Mr Hardy, "to dine with one of the great parliamentary leaders; a large company, and, as Bubb Doddington says of some of his dinners with the Pelhams, 'much drink and much good humour.'" In the midst of this festivity the papers and letters of the last English packet, which had just come in, were brought into the room, and given to the master of the house. Scarcely had he read one or two of them when it appeared that he was extremely agitated. The company was alarmed. "What's the matter? Nothing, we hope, has happened that ——" "Happened!" exclaimed their kind host, swearing most piteously. "Happened! the septennial bill is returned." A burst of joy from lord Charlemont and the very few real friends of the bill who happened to be present. The majority of the company, confused, and, indeed, almost astounded, began, after the first involuntary dejection of their features, to recollect that they had openly, session after session, voted for this bill, with many an internal curse, Heaven knows! But still they had uniformly been its loudest advocates; and that, therefore, it would be somewhat decorous not to appear too much cast down at their own unexpected triumphs. In consequence of these politic reflections, they endeavoured to adjust their looks to the joyous occasion as well as they could. But they were soon spared the labour of assumed felicity. "The bill is not only returned," continued their chieftain, "but the parliament is dissolved." "Dissolved, dissolved! why dissolved?" "My good friends, I can't tell you why or wherefore; but dissolved it is, or will be directly."—"Hypocrisy," says Mr H., "could lend its aid no further," and a sullen taciturnity fell upon the board. Taking advantage of this blank moment, lord Charlemont withdrew from the group, "than which, a more ridiculous, rueful set of personages, in his life, he said, he never beheld."

The English government must have strongly felt the necessity of shaking off the grasping and encumbering influence of this class of persons, so well described in the foregoing extract, and their patrons the borough-mongers, by whose means they had hitherto ruled the country. Hard to be kept in order, at a mighty cost, and impossible to satisfy, it was now for some time beginning to be felt that they were becoming yearly

less efficient in the work for which they were courted, flattered, and paid. A national spirit had been springing up around them, and they had not only been compelled to give way, but it was also felt that the disgrace and unpopularity of their characters, their tyranny and unconstitutional conduct, were reflected upon the administration which had recourse to such an unworthy instrumentality. From time to time, men of ability and spirit stood up to expose the system and its effects, with so much force and fulness as no underhand game of venality and deception could long continue to endure; and, if Ireland were for a few years longer to submit, yet such resources were not fit to be sported in the light of full and public exposure. The clouds and shadows of dawn were melting away during the advance of morn, and the night-haunting crew, with their deeds of darkness, could not much longer affront the daylight with impunity. The English government had no desire for the independence of parliament; but, far more anxious to unfetter themselves from the loathsome arms of that prostitute influence by which they were at the same time upheld, controlled, impoverished, and debased, they made their election, and secured for Ireland the first great step of political revival.

To trace out the few events which intervened between this and the great events of 1777, will not occupy many paragraphs. But we may observe here, that the vast expansion of the popular spirit in Ireland was fully shown by the reception of the octennial bill. It awakened a frenzy of delight; and the lord-lieutenant's carriage was drawn by the citizens, when he returned from the house, after giving the royal assent to it.

The parliament was dissolved, but a new parliament was not to meet for sixteen months, which time was considered necessary, to enable lord Townshend to complete his arrangements, by detaching the new members from their patrons. This important undertaking, of which the result was to be eventually of far different importance than was anticipated by any one, was to be effected by the most enormous corruption. The great boroughmongers could be secured by the various resources within the ordinary disposal of every administration. The subalterns were to be purchased at a ready-money sacrifice. The success was very considerable, but not entire, when the parliament was next assembled, in 1769. They had included in their drag-net some intractable and dangerous fishes.

A money bill, not originating in the commons, was thrown out unceremoniously. This defeat caused sensible mortification, and the more, as the popular party was joined by many of the castle retainers, who had in their bargain reserved to themselves some latitude. This resistance of the house of commons is the more remarkable, as it is the first instance, for nearly eighty years previous, on which they had manifested any determined spirit on the subject of money bills. An English journal, of a popular character, animadverted upon it in terms which strongly manifest the surprise it must have given, and the low idea of Ireland then entertained in England by any party. "The refusal of the late bill, because it was not brought in contrary to the practice of ages, in violation of the constitution, and to the certain ruin of the dependence of Ireland upon Great Britain, is a behaviour more suiting an army of



Whiteboys, than the grave representatives of a nation. This is the most daring insult yet offered to government," &c. In consequence of this act of resistance in the commons, lord Townshend prorogued the parliament, and in his speech pronounced a severe rebuke, in which he expounded to them the laws by which they were bound. The commons forbade their clerk from entering his speech upon their journals, and he entered his protest in the house of lords. Against this irregular proceeding five lords protested—viz., Lowth, Charlemont, Mountmorris, Powerscourt, and Longford. In any proceeding of the period, it would be vain to reason strictly upon right. Every act was more or less anomalous, and acts grounded on expediency were protected by a virtual irresponsibility. A crime in England liable to impeachment would have here been little more than a mistake. But assuredly, if the question thus opened were to be strictly looked into, the commons had right on their side. That the law of Poynings was clearly against them, may be admitted, on a plain construction of its *whole* sense. If there is any ambiguity to be allowed, it was strictly explained by subsequent statutes of Philip and Mary. But it was an established custom by which, under the form of "heads of bills," the commons had been allowed to originate such bills as they thought fit. Under the sanction of this form, they had uniformly been allowed the privilege of originating the money bills. They had acquired a prescriptive right, which may be considered as standing on the same ground as the similar constitutional privilege of the English commons, which is merely custom from time immemorial. The objection would, it is true, in the case of Ireland, arise from the terms of distinct enactments. The Irish privilege was opposed to the letter of the statute, and might be viewed as an usurpation; but it was an old one, and in strict conformity with the most recognised constitutional maxims. The whole system arising out of the laws of Henry VII., and of Philip and Mary, &c., was a gross anomaly—an exception in the statutes. The actual customs amounted to an admission of this truth; and the violation, in the present instance, of those customs, was an express declaration of a despotic power. It was made more glaring by other violations of a similar tendency, which were as directly against express law as against established right;—we mean those declarations of the British parliament, which had been occasionally made. The incident on which we have been remarking, itself led to some very strong language,—“Always considering that it is one of our most essential duties to maintain inviolate the supreme authority of the legislature of Great Britain over every part of the dominions of your majesty's crown.” This language, directly applied to the conduct of America, was understood to be intended to glance at that of the Irish parliament, and greatly helped the growing ferment there. There was also another incidental circumstance which produced a strong sensation in the commons. One of the members of the Irish administration let fall a hint that the money bill was in the nature of a fine for the renewal of the parliament. The main ground taken by the opposition in the parliament was constitutional, and seems to be more strong in itself than strictly applicable to a question of settled usage: the people, they affirmed, had no right to pay taxes laid on by the Irish privy council. But the reply must be so obvious, that we

need not state it: it is answered by the fact of their rejection of the bill.

The great aristocratic families, now beginning to feel themselves in some measure unseated from their place of influence, and seeing the further danger to which such proceedings on both sides would expose them, must at this time have felt no small embarrassment. They could not, without much reserve, act with either the government, which aimed itself to supersede their influence, or with the opposition, which was more directly opposed to that influence. They were by habits and prejudices bound to the general policy of administration; and thus while they lent themselves in parliament to the measures of the council, they were at the same time loud in their appeals to the people, against the course by which their authority in the elections had been tampered with and diminished.

After the prorogation, an interval of fourteen months elapsed, during which the liberality of lord Townshend's gratuities had full time to work; and on the next meeting, in February, 1771, a new spirit of compliance manifested itself in an address, which caused the speaker, Mr John Ponsonby, through whom it should have been presented, to resign. In the conclusion, they thanked his majesty "for continuing his excellency, lord Townshend, in the government of this kingdom." On this, Mr Ponsonby observed that this lord had, "on the last day of last session, accused them of a great crime," and that the thanks appeared to him "to convey a censure of the proceedings, and a relinquishment of the privileges of the commons." Mr Edmond Sexton Pery was, in consequence, chosen speaker, in the room of one worthy to preside over a more dignified assembly. The earl of Charlemont had made great but vain efforts to induce Ponsonby to keep the chair, and had thought himself successful; but after a night spent in reasonings to which the speaker assented, he was the next day surprised by the event. Though silent in the house, lord Charlemont was effectively the leader of the opposition through the whole proceedings of which we have here endeavoured to give an abridged view. His earnest zeal, and persevering alacrity—his constant good sense, and engaging manner, gave him universal weight among the better classes.

To keep our narrative unbroken, we omitted to mention that, in 1768, his lordship had married Miss Hickman, daughter of Mr Robert Hickman, of the county of Clare. It was, perhaps, something about the same time, or immediately after, that he built his house in Rutland Square, and also that at Marino. He was, it appears from a letter of his published in Mr Hardy's memoir, deterred from residing on his estates in the north of Ireland by the delicacy of his constitution, which required the vicinity of the sea, and ready access to the best medical advice. It is also, we conceive, an evident inference from his whole life and character, that he felt a strong parental feeling for the yet infant liberties of his country too strongly to quit the scene of political life. To him, indeed, with more than its mere figurative power, belongs the application of that expression which Mr Grattan applies somewhere to himself on another occasion, of having "watched her cradle." This part, at least, of that rhetorical antithesis was just and true for lord Charlemont.

The success of lord Townshend's administration now began more distinctly to be seen. The spirited resolutions, and the determined resistance of the opposition, were completely borne down by the government party, which appeared re-enforced by several clever young men brought in by lord Townshend, and by several additions to the peerage, which counterbalanced the growing opposition in the upper house. In consequence, every proposal for the good of the country was thrown overboard with a high hand. The burthen of misapplied taxation, the commercial and agricultural disadvantages, and other prominent defects which we shall presently have to detail, were vainly pressed by the party of lord Charlemont. At the same time, however, the attention of the opposition party in the British house of commons was forcibly awakened by the recent discussions on the rejected money bill, and some spirited proceedings took place, which showed that a just sense of the claims of Ireland was beginning to take root. But of this more decided manifestations were ere long to show themselves.

Lord Townshend was recalled in 1772. He had been successful in a high degree in effectuating the plan of policy for which he had been sent. But, on the whole, we see reason to suspect that the British government was disappointed in the result. In the mean time, a clearer insight had been obtained on the real interests and just claims of Ireland; and though the Irish privy council had been enabled to assert a strong control, it was becoming equally manifest that the opposition was also advanced in weight, intelligence, and general concert with the sense of the nation. If great power had been obtained, its limitations were become more apparent, and its exercise more unpopular. It is mentioned by some writers that lord Townshend was censured by the British cabinet, for not maintaining the dignity of the Irish court. He was a wit of the first water; and the house was told, by one of its members, that his lordship said more good things in one night than the whole house in a year. He won many friends by the charms of good fellowship, and the grace of free and liberal hospitality, so attractive to the Irish of the last century.

He was succeeded by lord Harcourt, a most amiable man. He was, however, less active and determined, and to some extent addicted to retirement and study, and of a temper too fastidious for the coarse jocularly which then pervaded the manners of this country. He had not, however, any formidable difficulty to encounter. The address of his predecessor had secured for him a tame parliament; and, so long as it lasted, no very formidable difficulty could be encountered. His secretary, De Blaquiere, on whom the burthen of public affairs fell, was qualified to make amends for the deficiency of the viceroy. He kept the best wine, and a first-rate French cook: he caught the manners, and cultivated the tastes of his supporters, with rapid tact. It was alleged in his praise, that he was the first secretary who ever bestowed a thought on the consideration of Irish interests—a strange, and yet highly probable affirmation.

We have omitted to mention somewhat earlier an event in the previous administration, of which the result belongs rather to a subsequent time, to which we shall now hurry on. A nobleman's agent in the north endeavoured to increase his employer's income by a most oppres-



sive arrangement, in consequence of which a large portion of a numerous protestant tenantry were compelled to throw up their farms, and driven into a state of destitution. They sought redress by a rising, and took the name of "Hearts of steel." Acts of dangerous concession increased their confidence, and multiplied their force; and, as usual with mobs of every country imperfectly governed, they presently set up to redress general grievances of every kind. They were put down by the necessary measures. But we only notice this rising to mention the result. Many thousand protestants emigrated to America, where they exerted no slight influence in exciting the spirit of resistance which soon after began to appear.

Of the American war we shall have to say more hereafter; but it must now be briefly noticed as the critical event on which the most important changes of the period were to turn.

The financial difficulties of the English government had, owing to various causes, unnecessary to detail in this place, been accumulating in an increasing ratio, during the two previous reigns; and various means were adopted, of which some were calculated to postpone and increase the difficulties; until at last the administration of lord Townshend conceived the unfortunate yet specious expedient of taxing the American colonies. The colonies, as ought to have been foreseen, resisted, and the resistance awoke and brought into action, those revolutionary elements with which the American states were then surcharged. From one step to another, resistance grew on from the stamp act in 1765, till the tax on tea, ten years later, terminated the prolonged dispute in war.

The effects bore with destructive pressure on Ireland. In England a great and most unhappy error prevailed as to the resources of this country. As her internal wealth was measured by a trade, which, contracted and impeded as it was, yet bore a disproportioned ratio to the state of the people, there was comparatively little internal consumption, and the means and produce of the country were poured nearly whole into the foreign markets. The public, considered with reference to wealth, consisted of the mercantile community alone, who (if we may transmute a well-known phrase,) constituted "*patriam in patriâ*." In 1773, a large debt had been created, and Irish rents, with the interest of this debt, were spent in England. So that when trade fell off, there was neither export nor internal consumption; and a universal poverty, with all its frightful concomitants, pervaded every class.

In an address at this time moved in the Irish house, we find several statements upon this distressed condition of the country, which may be regarded as the most authentic. The Irish debt is there stated to be £994,890, at the end of the previous session, with considerable arrears; on which a great exertion was made by loans and new duties, to equalize the revenue with the expenditure. The address states, that they adopted the calculations of the administration, and relied on the promises of ministers in vain. That they were now under the necessity of informing his majesty, that the result of all their efforts was only to show that they had arrived "at that point of taxation, where the imposition of new duties lowers the old ones." They represent the funds on which

they might borrow as exhausted, and their only resource, a tax on spirits, as the last sad proof of their duty and zeal. The expenses for the last two previous years, ending Lady-day 1775, had exceeded the revenue by £247,749,\* and the expedient of a tontine was again adopted to raise £175,000. Among the disadvantages attendant on this method of raising money, it was observed that the subscribers being almost all London merchants, the annuities were an additional exhaustion of the Irish specie.

A very general interest was felt in the progress of the American war. One incident may help to show the nature of this public sentiment. Lord Howard of Effingham, on learning that his regiment was destined for the American service, resigned his command,—for which the city of Dublin voted him its thanks, for having like a true Englishman refused to draw his sword against the lives and liberties of his fellow-subjects in America; and soon after, the guild of merchants presented him with another address of a still more decided character. This guild also addressed the peers of the opposition, who, “in support of the constitution, and in opposition to a weak and wicked administration, protested against the American restraining bills.” These are but a few specimens of numerous indications of the same tendency.

In February 1766, a proclamation of the lord-lieutenant and council was issued, laying an embargo on Irish provisions of every kind, except to Great Britain and British dominions not in rebellion, not otherwise restricted. This proceeding was considered illegal, and was resisted by a member in the house, the honourable George Ogle, who made a large shipment of beef to Bourdeaux.

We are reluctantly compelled to pass much that is important and interesting in the occurrences of this year, as quite inconsistent with the main scale of our history. The effects of the embargo were most extensive and afflicting. We should indeed have simply to repeat the foregoing statements with added force, but no great variety of details. The complaints of 1766 are but louder, more widely spreading, and sadder echoes of 1765.

Lord Harcourt was recalled, and lord Buckinghamshire sent in his room. As the Irish parliament had been latterly manifesting signs of an intractable spirit, great efforts had been made to secure and extend the influence thus endangered. Many new peerages restored the balance in the house of lords; no less than 18 new peers having been created in one day. The new viceroy himself, not without moderate talents and some knowledge of business, brought over with him as his secretary, a Mr Heron, the agent of his estates,—a person totally incapable of even comprehending, much less endeavouring to meet, the complication of difficulties and distresses of the country at a season of unparalleled emergency.

But more decisive events and more over-ruling influences, were at the same time in rapid preparation. And the struggle on which the future destiny of Ireland was to depend, seems to have passed into other

\* This motion was rejected, but is not the less authoritative, as it expresses the truths which it was the policy of the Irish council to suppress.

hands. The British administration at last thoroughly convinced of the critical state of Ireland, entered directly and liberally on the question of her sufferings and interests; and it is plain that in the English council there existed a disposition to do the fullest justice. And we must here add, that though in the first efforts, this liberal disposition was frustrated by the interests and prejudices of the English people; we are still inclined to refer to it many of the salutary measures, and even concessions which were afterwards attributed to more immediate and ostensible influences.

On the motion of lord Nugent, a committee was appointed in the English house of commons, to consider the trade of Ireland, and several resolutions were made in its favour, on which bills were framed. We do not enumerate them, as they were interrupted by very violent petitions from several of the most influential of the English trading towns, which were alarmed at any extension of the trade of Ireland. On this a very violent and protracted opposition took place, and the struggle was, for the occasion, compromised for some enlargements in favour of the linen trade.

The same liberality was more effectively exerted upon a question on which there was happily a prevailing unanimity of sentiment. The gentry of the Roman church were at last freed from the oppression of a law, at the same time cruel and inefficacious, which compelled them to hold their estates by evasions and connivances, insulting to their feelings and disgraceful to the legislature. Hitherto, their main resource against this unfortunate law had been fictitious conveyances to their protestant relations and friends, and a story is told that in one of the southern counties, a great part of the landed property was thus vested in a poor barber. The Irish judges also had to the utmost extent of their discretion, interrupted the operation of these iniquitous statutes, chiefly by the obstacles which they contrived to throw in the way of informers. And in some cases of great hardship, where there was no other resource, the legislature itself interfered by special acts. It was, under any conceivable modification, a dismal state of things, when the most respectable persons were compelled to stand in awe of the basest. "This species of universal subserviency," writes Mr Burke, "that makes the very servant who stands behind your chair, the arbiter of your life and fortune, has such a tendency to degrade and debase mankind, and to deprive them of that assured and liberal state of mind, which alone can make us what we ought to be, that I vow to God I would sooner bring myself to put a man to immediate death for opinions I disliked, and so get rid of the man and his opinions at once, than to fret him with a feverish being, tainted with the jail distemper of a contagious servitude, &c." A bill was introduced by Mr Luke Gardner, in 1778, "for the relief of his majesty's subjects of this kingdom professing the popish religion." By this bill all the severe enactments of William and Mary, affecting the tenure of property, with other penal regulations, were entirely removed. A similar measure was introduced by Sir George Saville, in the British house of commons, and passed without a single opposing vote. On this liberality it is here just to remark, that it went to the utmost extent, which, according to the political opinions of that period, was consistent with the safety of the



kingdom. Nor were the nobility and gentry of the church of Rome of a different opinion. The language of the Romish aristocracy in England was moderate and reasonable; they simply put forward, as with truth they might, their own unshaken and unsuspected loyalty. "We have patiently," they stated, "submitted to such restrictions and discouragements as the legislature thought expedient. We have thankfully received such relaxations of the rigour of the laws, as the mildness of an enlightened age, and the benignity of your majesty's government have gradually produced; and we submissively wait, without presuming to anticipate either time or measure, for such other indulgence as those happy causes cannot fail to effect." This meritorious spirit of patient moderation, thus shown, had long acted upon the national good sense and good feeling of the English nation; there no unhappy recurrences of party appeal to religious animosity had kept alive the prejudices of earlier times, till they had long survived their substantial causes. The English Romanists were but British subjects, and one among the numerous communions which acknowledge one crown, constitution, and standard. When the measure of Sir G. Saville was proposed, it was met with one sentiment of approbation. From Mr Burke's public statement already quoted, we learn in the most authoritative form, that not only the whole house of commons, but the "whole house of lords, the whole bench of bishops, the king, the ministry, the opposition, all the distinguished clergy of the establishment, all the eminent lights, (for they were consulted), of the dissenting churches; all were unanimous in their agreement." Happily then, this was not a great question—the ground of contending factions, and implicated with a dangerous complexity of considerations—it could be, and was, met simply on its own simple grounds.

We have now at length arrived at the critical point of Irish history, and may proceed more freely onward. The state of Ireland had become such as to make it apparent, that the game of expedients was at an end. From end to end, poverty, distress, and insolvency, lay like a cloud upon the land—the plainest statements drawn from the custom-house, and compared with the remittances of public money, exhibited the then startling fact, that these remittances amounted to more than double the sum accruing to Ireland from her entire exports. It was felt by every one at all conversant in public affairs, that such a state of things could not continue. The distress of England gave added force and weight to the cry of Ireland, and to the clamour for justice and relief which came monthly louder and louder over the channel. And while heated discussions on Irish rights were introduced and thrown out in the British parliament; and the Irish parliament, more within the sphere of the national sufferings, was assuming a firmer and less factious tone—incidents from without gave the ultimate direction to events.

The Irish channel was now become infested by American privateers which seized on trading vessels within sight of the shore. The Irish traders were, for the first time, compelled to sail under convoy along the very coast; and a great part of the English trade was compelled to be carried on in foreign bottoms. For a little time the British public was enabled to shut its eyes to the danger—the trade attendant

on the war itself cast a gleam of delusion on eyes willing to be deluded, while unequivocal symptoms of ruin affected all the permanent branches of trade, and bankruptcies thickened in every quarter. France continued to temporize, and, while she in every underhand manner abetted the Americans, still held out the language of pacific intention. A play of remonstrances and illusory compliances continued for some time to be carried on till May, when France having gained all the objects of procrastination, declared a treaty of commerce with America, in which the colonies were considered as independent, and concluded with a very intelligible intimation of preparations to act in concert with America for the maintenance of their treaty. And never did ambition and political bad faith more surely lay the fatal train which was to eventuate in a dreadful retribution, than the French court, when it thus cast its weight and sanction into this commencement of a great revolution, in the *vortex* of which it was in a few years more to occupy the bloody centre. In this critical moment, "when transatlantic liberty arose,"

"Not in the sunshine and the smile of heaven,  
But wrapt in whirlwinds and begirt with woes,"

duplicity, and rashness, extravagance, financial blundering, and despotism, singularly combined with the admission and encouragement of political and philosophical charlatanism, and the normal school of sedition, that sent out its emissaries into all the surrounding countries, made France the depository of collecting woes and crimes for the evil day that was ere long to rise for her chastisement.

Ireland, to which, from time immemorial, the enemies of England had directed the artifices and resources of secret intrigue, had not in the beginning of the great strife been overlooked by either America or France. But here the spirit of the people had widely changed, and there was a general sense entertained, that a more fair and liberal disposition towards the country had already begun to grow in England. The motions which had recently been made in the British house of commons, in favour of Irish interests, though frustrated by local opposition, had yet plainly manifested the friendly disposition of the higher authorities and the better classes—liberal concessions too, had actually been made, and a general sentiment was awakened of hopeful expectation; with this there was a gloomy recollection that rebellion had only woven and rivetted chains, and laid waste the very sources of renovation. The addresses of America had excited temporary heat; but the better and then more influential portion of the Irish people reciprocated the maxims and precepts of patriotism and of freedom, neither in the hostile temper of America, nor in the fanatic, mystical, and rationalizing temper of the volatile Parisians, but after their own peculiar spirit with a religious frame of heart, and bent of opinion, on which, infidelity, the great relaxer of all principles, could not tell with any wide effect,—a native shrewdness not easy to be fooled by new delusions, though not proof against as strong a tendency to old prejudices,—a natural though mixed and variously tempered loyalty, and a rising hope of better times. These saner influences operated at the moment with some conditions of a differ-



ent kind, among which we shall now only delay to notice one—that the large class of Irish among whom the seeds of internal disorganization might with most apparent probability be looked for, were then, neither in strength nor intelligence, in the least degree formidable.

Such was the general state of affairs when a moment of great and nearly unexampled alarm arose and prevailed both in England and Ireland, and the fear of invasion by a French fleet became universal. The combined French and American fleet rode freely through the channel, and the harbour of Dublin was fortified for the first time. The great commercial city of the north, Belfast, applied for protection to the government: the secretary replied by an acknowledgment of weakness, and they were offered half a troop of dismounted cavalry and half a corps of invalids. This acknowledgment of helplessness was tantamount to a free commission of self-defence, and prompt and effective was the conduct with which it was answered. The city immediately formed a volunteer corps, to which they elected officers, and which was armed, clothed, and maintained, at its own expense. The example ran through all the northern towns. The town of Armagh raised the corps which was immediately commanded by lord Charlemont.

As the rise and growth of the volunteers were prompt, sudden, and rapid, so the effects were immediate, extensive, and various. The government was alarmed; the enemy was disconcerted; and a deep and pervading sense became universal, though cautiously as well as generously suppressed, that without any one act of disloyalty or disaffection, but with the sanction of the most honourable and righteous occasions, Ireland, for the first time, held her own fortune in her hands.

The government was dismayed because they at once saw the whole strength of the position thus obtained, while they were far from any anticipation of the temperate spirit which was to govern the results. They had neither men nor money, and felt themselves compelled to choose between a French invasion, and an armed people; and they preferred the safer alternative. They could not, however, fail to be aware of the highly civilized character, and the loyal motives of the northern volunteers; and the rank, pretensions, and property of the body of gentlemen by whom they were officered, must have been felt to be a ground of security. This security, however, could only operate so far as respected the general peace and security of the country; for though the volunteers were adulterated by not even a mixture of the mere rabble which constitutes the force of rebellions, they were thus but more to be feared, as menacing danger to those unconstitutional abuses and mal-organizations to which the minds of such men as now led their country's defence, and were armed with her power, were most likely to look upon with hostility. To meet this formidable apprehension, the only resource would have been as quickly as possible to neutralize their national character by investing them with that of regular troops under the pay, discipline, and orders of the castle. But for such a purpose there was no money to be had, nor would it probably have availed. It was attempted to persuade the officers to take out regular commissions,—this being, as they suggested, the only ground of safety in the case of being taken prisoners. But the motive was



otherwise understood, and the refusal, perhaps, may be placed among the numerous indications that these gentlemen had from the first a full sense of their position of strength.

The enemy, on their part, saw the danger of encountering such a force—it was, doubtless, much exaggerated by report. It also convinced them of the inutility of relying on any aid to be derived from Irish disaffection,—the great motive of all the invasions ever directed to her coasts.

The further and more important events with the history of the volunteers demand a more extended and circumstantial narration. The prosperous operation of this great public movement may be referred to the character of its leaders, and to the general unanimity of the public mind as to the justice of its objects. And Mr Hardy has, we think, justly observed, that results so favourable could not have occurred if (as happened some years later) the principles of the French revolution had been instilled into the public mind. The justice of these reflections is, in truth, nearly self-evident. The effects of any dissension between the ranks and orders of the state, are directly and immediately subversive of society; and of this the dissolution of the ancient Roman commonwealth is an example on a large, and that of France, on a small scale. But the event of the time of which we now write was a wholly different result from wholly different means. The objects then contended for were, unanimously and earnestly, the desire of every individual of every rank and creed, not actually in the pay of government. They were plain, universal, and evident rights, concerning which there was no question in point of principle,—free trade and a free parliament. The leaders of the contest were the noblest in rank, the ablest in understanding, and the most justly respected for private worth and public integrity. They were followed by the better part of the Irish people, placed by circumstances on a vantage-ground of influence not under ordinary circumstances to be attained by the public. The public which cannot directly interfere in the legislature unless by some movement of an antisocial nature, was imbodyed in this instance, by a concurrence of incidents, wholly untinged with revolutionary excitement, to give effect to the purest and noblest portion of its virtue and intelligence. “Lord Charlemont,” writes Mr Hardy—“and the great and good men who acted with him, took care to confine the public mind to two great principles,—the defence of the empire, and the restoration of the constitution. In their steps to the latter, they were peculiarly cautious to limit the national claim to such a point only as Ireland herself could not decide upon,—this was a grant of free trade.” In the same paragraph he observes the effect produced by the good conduct of the volunteers. “If the kingdom,” he writes, “was menaced from abroad, it was at home in a state of unexampled security. Private property, private peace, were everywhere watched over by the volunteers with a filial and pious care.” They could not, he observes, be styled “a banditti,”—the term applied by ministers to the American associations.

When the propositions in favour of Irish trade which lord North had this year introduced into the British parliament, after being assented to by that body, were suppressed in compliance with the jea-

lousy of several English manufacturing towns. There was (as we have already observed) a far greater hope communicated by the good intent thus manifested by the British government, than of discouragement from the narrow selfishness of the trading communities by which it was intercepted. But it was at the same time felt, that some public demonstration was necessary, both to counteract the effects, and expose the folly and injustice of such opposition. The non-importation agreement, formerly recommended by Swift, was now zealously and generally adopted. The effects were immediate and beneficial; the demands of luxury and fashion which had hitherto contributed to the trade of England, now were turned to renew our own; and a wide-spread despondency was changed into gratitude and hope.

The volunteers, in the mean time, rapidly increased in spirit, discipline, and numbers; and lord Charlemont, whose inspiriting influence was felt in every rightly directed effort of the public mind, devoted all his exertion to their improvement in these respects.

In October, 1779, the Irish parliament assembled. It opened with an incident amply illustrative of the foregoing statements. In the previous session, an amendment to the address, expressive of the sense of the public-spirited Opposition, had been in the usual manner negatived by the house. It nevertheless, according to Mr Hardy, "left a strong impression on the house," and we can have no doubt, had, in the meantime, operated as a rallying point to public feeling. Mr Daly, who had been the mover, and the illustrious band of eminent men, of whom he was one, now determined to try it once more. On the present occasion the ministerial address moved by Sir Robert Deane, and simply echoing the speech from the throne, was supported by Mr R. H. Hutchinson, Sir H. Cavendish, and the attorney-general: the amendment moved by Mr Grattan was supported by Mr Ogle, Sir Edward Newenham, the provost of Trinity College—the honourable Henry Flood, and the prime sergeant. Mr Grattan censured the speech as inexplicit—and as an attempt to quiet the public mind, without any express declaration—he then dwelt strongly on the distresses of the kingdom, which he described as "the beggary of the people, and the bankruptcy of the state." The first he attributed to commercial restrictions, the second to the boundless prodigality, and other crimes of administration. The amendment which he offered, injudiciously connected the object proposed with complaints very likely to excite division, but concluded by proposing "a free export trade," as the only remedy. Sir H. Cavendish replied by a dexterous proposal, that the object in view would be better effected, by appointing a committee for the purpose. Mr Ogle exposed the artifice of such a proposal, and pointedly reminded the commons of the old excuse of ministers, who were accustomed to plead the silence caused by their own artifices, "that truly they did not know what the Irish wanted, as their parliament was silent on the head." After some others had spoken with great strength, the leaders of the castle party saw the necessity of a change of direction: it seemed too obviously necessary to tack before the strong change of wind: a declaration was made from the administration benches, that they would not oppose the



amendment. As many of the leading members of the opposition objected to the terms of Mr Grattan's amendment, Mr Burgh now rose to move it in another equally decided, but less encumbered form. When he was about to move—Mr Flood whispered to him across the benches, "state a free trade only." Burgh had so intended, or he took the hint, and moved, "that it is not by temporary expedients, but by a free trade alone, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin."

This amendment was unanimously carried. When the house went up to present their address at the castle, the way between College-green and Dame Street, was lined with the volunteers, with the duke of Leinster at their head.

This decisive stroke, not more influential as a declaration, than for its effect upon the body from whence it came, and indeed on every constituent portion of the nation, was followed up with a vigour and decision hitherto unknown in the annals of Irish Oppositions. It was indeed a moment for the overflow of that national triumph, which followed and urged, as well as encouraged the whole course of these eventful proceedings. The presence of the national volunteers, imparted an influence, and propagated an impulse which diffused itself into every part of the kingdom and operated on every class; as yet animated only by the first loyal and constitutional sentiment which brought them together, and unaffected by that accumulating fever of self-confidence and self-assertion which is sure, sooner or later, to alter the direction and infatuate the progress of all such merely popular organizations, their presence had none but beneficial effects. They were, it is true, an unconstitutional force, but the whole state of things around them was also unconstitutional, and seemed to call for the presence of some power more quick and energetic than is afforded by the common system of civil order to give the sanatory impulse to its vital action. The forces of social order and progress, were feebly developed, conflicting among themselves and overpowered by the active proximity of British rule. The ruler and the ruled had not the reciprocal interest which commonly tempers and modifies their common relation:—it was the seeming interest of England to oppress the trade, and for this purpose to repress the strength of Ireland and the main instrument by which these objects were mainly effected, was internal division. It was essential for the dispersion of so fatal a union of forces, involving all the vital functions in a combination of disease, that some extra constitutional force should be applied, and such were the Irish volunteers. In the entire history of revolutions, there will not be found a case in which this force was so sanely and temperately used. Called up on a great and sudden emergency, with the sanction of government, and headed by the best talent and virtue in the Irish aristocracy, they were an extra legal but not lawless concentration of national strength with national intelligence and feeling: in availing themselves of the advantage of this position, they were rigidly within the limits of a sacred and imperative duty. Their demands went no further than the precise measure of this duty: and so far as the necessity of the occasion allowed, they gradually abstained from transgressing the lines of that constitution which it was their object to perfect



and repair, not infringe. The first demonstrations of such a power were universally felt. England saw the necessity of yielding that justice which her enlightened statesmen only awaited permission to yield. The factions which conceived their own sordid interests to be promoted by misgovernment were overawed and discouraged, while the more liberal and enlightened, who were animated by a true and enlightened patriotism, were inspired with confidence and hope. Thus, animated by a powerful combining sentiment, a clear intelligence and a tempered but resolute spirit, they imparted at the same time confidence to some, and control to others. Corresponding with this important indication of Irish sense and spirit, an improved sense of the true commercial interests of both countries and disposition to justice towards Ireland, had obtained no small growth among the higher classes in England: the British legislature, through all its branches, had already taken the lead in declaring the most free and liberal consent, and the only opposition which in fact existed, had its origin in certain local interests. This last-mentioned opposition too had been in some measure removed by the nonimportation agreement; and it only remained to be shown, that the claims of Ireland were become imperative, and that any further delays must end in consequences which no party or class could fail to deprecate. With the sense of justice, the perception of necessity became now clearly combined, and for an interval, the popular party acted under the inspiring conviction, that the fortune of Ireland was in their hands.

Such was the immediate aspect of opinion and public feeling, at the moment when the Irish house of commons, having passed and presented their address, amid the peals of national enthusiasm, entered in a new spirit on a course of proceedings, dictated by the same impulse, and countenanced by the same array of national strength. They commenced by passing a unanimous vote of thanks to the volunteers; and, entering upon business, they manifested the consistency of their temper by passing the vote of supply for six months only. They immediately after passed a resolution of the utmost importance, stating the wants of the country in a distinct form. It was moved, and unanimously carried, that "the exportation from this country of its woollen and other manufactures to all foreign places, would materially tend to relieve its distresses, increase its wealth," &c. Another clause expressed their sense of the advantages to be derived from the American, West Indian, and African trades.

During the same session, the expedient of raising money by a lottery was for the first time used in Ireland. £200,000 were raised by 40,000 tickets, at £5 each, and the prizes were paid with debentures, bearing interest at 4 per cent. Another sum of £140,000 was raised by an issue of treasury bills, bearing interest £4:11:3d. per cent.

On the 13th December 1779, the claims of Ireland were once more advanced under more favourable auspices in the British house of commons. Lord North brought forward three propositions,—to allow Ireland the free export of wool, woollens, and wool flocks—a free export of glass and all glass manufactures—a free trade with all the British plantations, upon certain considerations, of which the basis was to be the equalization of customs, &c. In his speech, the noble

lord showed great ability and a thorough knowledge of the subject. He was supported by his opponents of the year before, and carried these important resolutions with the full consent of both sides of the house. Bills on the two first resolutions were brought in with rapidity, passed both houses, and received the royal consent before the holidays.

The third resolution involved more extensive considerations; and it was also felt desirable to ascertain, before further concession, in what spirit it would be received. Happily, the Irish parliament, as well as the people, took the measure with every expression of gratitude and satisfaction, and granted supplies for a year and a half. A sum of £610,000 was borrowed, to discharge the arrears upon the establishment, and an addition to the revenue was made, to the amount of £150,000 a-year.

The new-born spirit of independence was not long suffered to slumber in congratulation. When, shortly after, the mutiny bill, passed as usual for a limited time, was transmitted, it was made perpetual by the English privy council. This infringement of rights was soon and hotly debated in the Irish parliament; but this body was perhaps actuated by a sense that they had shown enough of spirit, and that much had been conceded; they now finally confirmed the altered bill. The compliance gave high and instantaneous offence to the public. Several of the boroughs at once remonstrated. The merchant corps of the volunteers held a meeting at the Royal Exchange, in which several highly spirited resolutions were passed. Of these we shall only distinguish one:—"Resolved, that we will concur with the volunteer corps of this kingdom, and the rest of our fellow-subjects, in every effort to avert the dangers we are threatened with." But on this, and numerous minor incidents, which during the next following year occupied the public, it will be unnecessary to enter in detail. It will be enough to state, that their general effect was to awaken, keep on the alert, and concentrate the public attention; so that a growing excitement, an increasing consciousness of power, and a sense that the occasion was critical for the assertion of national rights, pervaded every class at all susceptible of political impulse. The Irish volunteers continued to increase in spirit and strength; and while they thus increased, they also began more and more to assume the overt form of a political organ, and to appear less equivocal in their similarity to the ordinary developments of revolutionary movement. At length, in 1782, they assumed an attitude so imposing and formidable, that all obstacles of a political nature gave way before the menace of their power, and the party which was backed by their formidable influence gained a victory, which would have been more productive of unmixed advantage, if the victors had more fully appreciated their position, and seen where to stop. The event to which we allude was the meeting of the representatives of 143 corps of volunteers of Ulster, at Dungannon. They passed resolutions, which imbodyed every question and every cause of complaint. They first asserted their own right to debate and publish their opinions, and then proceeded, in a series of spirited resolutions, to declare the exclusive right of legislation to be in the king, lords, and commons of Ireland. They declared against the powers assumed by the privy council of both kingdoms, under the pretence of Poyning's



law. They asserted the right of free trade in its fullest extent, condemned the perpetual mutiny bill, asserted the necessity of the independence of the judges. They declared their fixed resolution to seek the redress of the grievances thus stated, appointed a standing committee to represent, act for them, and call general meetings of the province. They strongly condemned the conduct of the court of Portugal, which refused admission to Irish goods, and pledged themselves not to consume any wine of the growth of that kingdom during the continuance of such an exclusion, and concluded by a declaration of their approbation of the recent acts in favour of the Church of Rome, in the following terms:—"That we hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves. Resolved, therefore, that as men and as Irishmen, as christians and as protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman catholic fellow-subjects," &c. They also moved an address of thanks to the minority in the two houses. The brevity of this address enables us to give it a place, which its nervous spirit and its importance merits:—

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"We thank you for your noble and spirited, though hitherto ineffectual efforts in defence of the great constitutional and commercial rights of your country. Go on; the almost unanimous voice of the people is with you; and in a free country the voice of the country must prevail. We know our duty to our sovereign, and are loyal. We know our duty to ourselves, and are resolved to be free. We seek for our rights, and no more than our rights; and in so just a pursuit, we should doubt the being of Providence if we doubted of success."

The conduct of the Ulster volunteers met with universal applause, and their example was followed by all the other corps throughout Ireland. We shall only specify the lawyers' corps, which resolved, "that we do highly approve of the resolutions and address of the Ulster volunteers, represented at Dungannon on the 15th February instant. That as citizens and volunteers, we will co-operate with the several corps whose delegates met at Dungannon," &c.

The Dungannon committee immediately published a spirited address to the electors of Ulster. Among other strong expressions they said, "It is a time pregnant with circumstances which revolving ages may not so easily combine. The spirit of liberty is gone abroad; it is embraced by the people at large, and every day brings with it an accession of strength. The timid have laid aside their fears, and the virtuous sons of Ireland stand secure in their numbers." These sentences may be offered as descriptive of the sensation at that moment beginning to be universal in Ireland.

These demonstrations were followed by others as decided from other public bodies, of whom the sheriffs, freemen, and freeholders of Dublin may be mentioned. Still more remarkable for its forcible, yet tempered and constitutional expression of the general feeling, was the address from the university of Dublin to its representatives, Wal-



ter Burgh and John Fitzgibbon. To this we shall have to revert on a future occasion.

At last, the combination of favourable circumstances necessary for the great change which was to take place, was fully matured. Strong expediency; a determined and unanimous national feeling; leaders the ablest, as well as most influential, were added to a friendly administration. Mr Fox brought down a message to the English commons from the king, "that being concerned to find discontents and jealousies prevailing among his loyal subjects in Ireland, on matters of great weight and importance, he earnestly recommended to the house to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a final adjustment as might give satisfaction to both kingdoms." The sincerity of the intentions of the king and of the British government, was rendered now apparent by the straightforward and unequivocal manner of their proceeding. The same message was sent to the house of lords; and that the measure consequent thereupon should have the fullest concurrence of both kingdoms, a similar message was conveyed to the Irish parliament through the secretary, which office was then held by John Hely Hutchinson. The detail of the transactions of a legislative character which emanated from this proceeding, will more appropriately be entered upon in the life of Mr Grattan, to which we refer for the continuation of the political history of this immediate interval,—here simply confining our narration to such notices as may render intelligible the remainder of the history of the Irish volunteers and of lord Charlemont.

On the king's message, an address was moved by Mr Grattan, in the Irish house of commons, both expressing the gratitude of Ireland, and stating her principal grievances: and, in consequence, a repeal of the act 6th Geo. I. was moved on the same day in both houses in England. As to the mutiny bill, and on Poyning's law—the English parliament viewing them as concerns lying entirely between the king and the Irish parliament—simply carried a general resolution, purporting that a solid connexion should, by mutual consent, be established between the two countries; at the same time, a bill for securing the independence of the judges had been returned to the castle. For our present purpose of a mere summary, there is no more to be told. The Irish legislature was at once placed in a position of the most unqualified independence, and all was triumph and congratulation. The services of Mr Grattan, in bringing about this desirable consummation, were acknowledged by the secretary, and it was also on this occasion that a munificent reward for those services was voted by the Irish house of commons. A sum of £100,000 was voted toward raising 20,000 seamen for the fleet.

The volunteers of Ulster and Connaught published loyal addresses, which expressed or gave a tone to the public mind; and for the moment a common feeling of enthusiasm appeared universal. "The distinction between England and Ireland is no more; we are now one people; we have but one interest, one cause, one enemy, one friend, and we trust that the conduct of the Irish nation will demonstrate to all mankind, that the same spirit which grasps at liberty and spurns at usurpation, is equally alive to the impressions of friendship, of kindness, and of

generosity." Such was the language of the Irish volunteers, in this moment which seemed so auspicious for the fortunes, and so satisfactory to the pride of this country.

We now pass to the more exclusive history of lord Charlemont and his volunteers. It demands no elaborate exposition to render it clear to the common experience of the most ordinary observer of popular movement, how a body constituted of such elements, and having a bond of combination so charged with excitement, should, by no very slow degrees, change in its character and in the direction of its views; how the sense of influence and of strength, how the stimulus and love of power, and how, also, the extension of its originating motives and principles, with many other less obvious causes, would by degrees transgress the limits within which their application could be useful or safe. Such spontaneous organizations of national power and patriotism, called forth by public emergency, cannot, indeed, be too exclusively confined to the immediate occasion which has thus required them; for the virtue, discretion, and knowledge of the best class of men who are not professionally conversant with public affairs, is altogether unequal to any safe interference beyond the call of these rough expedencies. Of these reflections, the history of the volunteers offers no inaccurate illustration. Called together by a moment of obvious and imminent danger, the existence of the volunteers was happily coincident with a juncture of circumstances which gave them an incidental weight in hastening the progress of measures favourable to the freedom and commercial prosperity of Ireland. But having been thus so far fortunately efficient, they quickly became the centre in this country for the reception of many popular influences of a more questionable nature, which then profoundly worked in the heart of Europe, and more especially in France and England. The fervour of liberty was to gather intensity until it had reached the fever point; and we cannot but consider the subsequent conduct of the Irish volunteers as among the most remarkable indications of the early working of the same principle which afterwards showed itself in its more advanced stages in the French Revolution and in the Irish Rebellions. Happily for the time of our history, these dangerous elements were as yet far from the point of explosion; it must also be admitted that the volunteers were constituted of the very best elements of the Irish population, and governed by the purest and noblest of the classes above them.

At the same period involved in our present narrative, there was in England a strong public excitement upon the question of parliamentary reform. In Ireland it found a ready reflection in the ranks of the volunteers. Here, indeed, the demand for such a reform was far more evident, as will be readily admitted from the statements in the foregoing part of this memoir. Here the cry for reform had already been more than once raised by a few eminent members of the opposition, and the advantages so recently obtained, now gave increased ardour to the political zeal of the volunteers and the opposition members in the Irish house of commons. "The voice of England," observes Mr Hardy, "in favour of reform was re-echoed here, not by the people, but by the volunteers; issuing indeed from the people, but still a military body, numerous and formidable."



Thus gradually heated by a strong zeal, the volunteers exalted their sense of their own character, and enlarged their requisitions. They began to arrogate to themselves the deliberative functions of a parliament, and the right of dictation to the national legislature. In the spring of 1783, they began to hold meetings, in which strong resolutions in favour of reform were passed; and in July, a committee of delegates met in Belfast, and sent letters to lord Charlemont, as well as to the duke of Richmond, Mr Pitt, and other members of the British administration. In that which lord Charlemont received, the following passage announced the extent of their views:—"We have yet another favour to request, viz., that your lordship would inform us whether shortening the duration of parliaments, exclusion of pensions, limiting the number of placemen, and a tax on absentees, or any of them, be, in your lordship's opinion, subjects in which the volunteers of Ireland ought to interfere; and we earnestly request that your lordship may favour us with a sketch of such resolutions as your lordship would think proper to be proposed at Dungannon."

This letter was received by lord Charlemont with some sensations of uneasiness. He fully approved the political sentiments which it expressed, but strongly deprecated the spirit of interference which it not less plainly manifested. He wrote a manly and temperate answer, in which, having expressed his concurrence with their view of measures generally, he reminded them that these questions were already in competent hands, and advised them to confine their addresses simply to the general desire for parliamentary reform.

The moderation of his lordship was unhappily confined to himself. On the 8th September, 1783, 500 delegates, representing 248 volunteer corps of Ulster volunteers, assembled in Dungannon. They passed thirteen resolutions, of which the substance was generally such as every one will at once truly conjecture; the last alone will be enough to quote:—"That a committee of five persons from each county be now chosen by ballot, to represent this province in a grand national convention, to be held at noon, in the Royal Exchange, Dublin, on the 10th day of November next, to which we trust each of the other provinces will send delegates, to digest and publish a plan of parliamentary reform, to pursue such measures as may appear to them likely to render it effectual, to adjourn from time to time, and convene provincial meetings if found necessary." This remarkable resolution was accompanied by directions to their delegates as to the expediency and means of obtaining specific information upon the state of the boroughs, and a recommendation to the Irish representatives to refuse their consent to bills of supply, for any term beyond six months, till a full redress of all grievances should have been obtained. They also published an address to the "volunteer armies of the provinces of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught." The language of this address was highly calculated to alarm every thinking and observing person; for it was specious and inflammatory, and spoke precisely the language which has always proceeded from revolutionary conventions, under whatever name they have met. One clause will be for the present enough:—"From a grand national convention, distinguished by integrity, and inspired with the courageous spirit of the constitution, every



blessing must result. With one voice, then, the voice of united millions, let Ireland assert her claim to freedom." In this address they also state their object to be the maturing of an "extensive plan of reform," to be "produced as the solemn act of the volunteer army of Ireland."

The plan thus proposed at Dungannon was at once adopted by the other provincial corps. On the 10th of November they met in Dublin, and elected the earl of Charlemont for their chairman. For the particulars of its meeting we shall quote Mr Hardy:—"The convention met in Dublin, at the Royal Exchange, when, as preparatory to everything else, they chose lord Charlemont their president. The same reason," says his lordship, "which had induced me to accept the nomination from Armagh, and to persuade many moderate friends of mine, much against their wishes, to suffer themselves to be delegated, namely, that there should be in the assembly a strength of prudent men, sufficient, by withstanding or preventing violence, to secure moderate measures, induced me now to accept the troublesome and dangerous office of president, which was unanimously voted to me. Another reason also concurred to prevent my refusal. The bishop of Derry had, I knew, done all in his power to be elected to that office, and I feared that, if I should refuse, the choice might fall on him, which would, indeed, have been fatal to the public repose." The delegates being very numerous, the place of meeting was altered from the Exchange, the rooms of which were too small, to the Rotunda, in Rutland Square. Lord Charlemont, as president, led the way, accompanied by a squadron of horse; then followed the delegates, who walked two and two, and formed a procession altogether as novel as imposing. . . . . When the convention proceeded to business, it was soon found that his moderation and good sense, aided by the most respectable in that convention, would too often prove altogether inefficient. Though Mr Brownlow, a wise man, carrying with him that authority which wisdom and integrity, supported by large possessions, will generally command, was chairman of the committee into which the convention resolved itself—though other gentlemen, the most respectable, formed the sub-committee, whose business it was to receive plans of reform—the violent, untutored, and unprincipled, sometimes prevailed, and carried resolutions totally contrary to the wishes of the president or chairman."

"A singular scene was soon displayed, and yet such a scene as any one who considered the almost unvarying disposition of an assembly of that nature, and the particular object for which it was convened, might justly have expected. From every quarter, and from every speculatist—great clerks or no clerks at all—was poured out in such a multiplicity of plans of reform, some of them ingenious, some which bespoke an exercised and rational mind, but in general, as I have been well assured, so utterly impracticable, "so rugged and wild in their attire," they looked not like "the offspring of inhabitants of the earth, and yet were on it;" that language would sink in portraying this motley band of incongruous fancies—of misshapen theories—valuable only if inefficient, or execrable if efficacious. All this daily issued from presumptuous empirics, or the vainly busy minds of some political

philanthropists, whom the good-breeding alone of their countrymen permitted to be regarded as not totally out of their senses. The committee showed a perseverance almost marvellous, but the musky conceits and solemn vanities of such pretenders would have put even the patience of the man of Uz to flight. At last, after being for several days bewildered in this palpable obscure of politics, and more and more theories flitting round the heads of the unfortunate, that which must for ever take place on such occasions, took place here. A dictator was appointed, not indeed in name, but in substance."

The convention went vigorously to work in the execution of their assumed duties, and having speedily digested a scheme of parliamentary reform, Mr H. Flood was requested to introduce in the house of commons a bill in accordance with the views they had adopted.

On the 29th November, 1783, Mr Flood moved for leave to bring in a bill for the more equal representation of the people in parliament. He was replied to by the attorney-general, who, among other objections, urged its origin from an armed body, as inconsistent with the freedom of the house. "We sit not here," he said, "to register the edicts of another assembly, or to receive propositions at the point of the bayonet;" and after some expressions of praise due to their former merits, he added, "but when they turn aside from this honourable conduct—when they form themselves into a debating society, and with that rude instrument, the bayonet, probe and explore a constitution which requires the nicest hand to touch, I own my respect and veneration for them is destroyed. If it will be avowed that this bill originated with them, I will reject it at once, because I consider that it decides the question, whether this house or the convention are the representatives of the people, and whether this house or the volunteers are to be obeyed." Mr Flood defended his motion and the volunteers with great power, but with a speciousness somewhat too apparent, and after several able speeches from Sir H. Languishe, Mr Ponsonby, and Mr Fitzgibbon, who had all opposed the motion on the same ground, it was rejected by a large majority. The delegates had, on their part, omitted no expedient which might be presumed to lend weight and influence to their orator. They crowded into the galleries and passages in their uniforms, and listened in stern impatience to this discussion. The house expressed its sense of this method of interference in a strong resolution.

In the mean time, the convention continued to sit. Lord Charlemont, after two hours, receiving no intelligence from the house, and justly surmising what had occurred, prevailed on them to adjourn till Monday. On Monday, soon after they had come together, a delegate arose to harangue against the proceedings of the house of commons; but lord Charlemont had foreseen this, and fully appreciated the danger of a new impulse which might have the effect of hurrying them forward in the course of indiscretion to which they seemed but too well inclined. He accordingly interposed, and prevailed upon them to adopt the parliamentary rule, that nothing said in one house should be noticed in another. His most anxious and continual vigilance was nevertheless barely sufficient for the prevention of that collision which he feared. So great was the tendency to gather heat and impulse,



displayed in this assembly, which had manifestly survived its nobler functions, and was rapidly degenerating into the blind and precipitate organ of revolutionary movement. Under such circumstances, the moderation, sagacity, and firmness, of lord Charlemont are seen to eminent advantage. Numerous letters and addresses from the different volunteer corps appealed to his patriotism, and besieged his resolution. Having won golden opinions as the leader of those movements from which most signal advantages had resulted, he had next to resist and repress the passions and the zeal, not according to wisdom, which had derived ardour and impulse from success. The difficulty was increased by the encouragement which the volunteers received from Mr Flood, their lieutenant-colonel, whose vast rhetorical talents gave him a stormy sway over the minds of a body of men already fired into more than the ordinary heat of factions.

Many circumstances had, nevertheless, for some time previous to the incidents here related, been tending to bring about their dissolution. Like all popular bodies, they sustained the ordinary effects of tumultuary action. They first overshot the principle of their organization; next, brought forth division, raised resistance, and became subject to individual dictation. The government followed their motions with a vigilant eye, and took advantage of each unwary step; the institution of the fencible regiments thinned their ranks, and deprived them largely of their officers; the moderation of one part divided them from the violence of others; and when, by the tumultuary proceeding just related, they came into collision with the house of commons, they had ceased to be formidable as an army, and were reduced to a factious party, which the better part of their own leaders lent a hand to repress.

After much violent feeling had been shown, the temper and discretion of lord Charlemont at length prevailed in bringing back the meeting to their original object, and after some motions in favour of reform, and a short address in vindication of themselves and the motives of their conduct, they consented to an adjournment *sine die*. Some further reflections of a more general nature will find a more appropriate place in a future page, when we shall have to take up the thread of our historical statement, and to connect the occurrences here noticed with subsequent events. We shall now briefly revert to some incidents in which the personal history of lord Charlemont is more immediately involved.

During the progress of these political events, in which he had exercised a more efficient and beneficial influence than any other individual, lord Charlemont occupied a central position in the aspect of all the main parties. He had the unusual good fortune, at the same time, to head the great movement of his countrymen, so far as it continued safe or wise, and to command the esteem of the British government. Having, till 1773, always kept a house in London, and enjoyed the best society which its rank, fashion, and literature afforded, he then, at the call of duty, and with no motive of self-interest, abandoned this most grateful and congenial advantage, to watch over the birth and early growth of his country's national existence. With a high spirit of the purest patriotism, he held back from all the honours and advantages of which his station and national importance drew continued offers from the



Irish administration; so that, indeed, he often found it a delicate and embarrassing duty to refuse those favours which other statesmen have been most anxious to obtain by all the resources of solicitation. From the turbulent and precipitate character of those impulses which it was his task to govern, he had often to sustain the difficult part of supporting the expedient measures of the government on one hand, while, on the other, he was compelled to offer uncompromising resistance. In both of these conflicting duties, he never lost sight of his own dignity and honour, or weakly bent to either popular dictation or to influence in high places. He was tender and sensitive, and often felt in secret the painful embarrassment of his position: but in his public conduct and language he showed at all times a noble and commanding front, serene, unswerving, and unshaken; nor have we in his whole conduct been able to detect a shadow of those qualities of ambition, private motive, or any of those sentiments terminating in self, which are so often the concealed subtexture of political virtue.

On the nomination of earl Temple, in 1782, to the Irish government, he received from that nobleman a kind letter to conciliate his support. Earl Temple well merited the approbation and support of a man like lord Charlemont. His administration was graced by the institution of the knights of St Patrick; and in accepting the riband of that order, lord Charlemont was felt to pay, as well as receive, a compliment. Earl Temple carried stern and unsparing reform into every branch of the executive department, and on his departure, in the following year, he was escorted by the Irish volunteers, who lined the streets through which he passed to the sea-side.

With the earl of Northington who succeeded, lord Charlemont was on the same good terms, was cultivated as assiduously, and was enabled to be of the most efficient use in the conduct of many difficult affairs; insomuch, that lord Northington was impressed with a sense of the disadvantage of his not occupying a seat in the privy council. Having taken the steps essential for such a purpose, he wrote a flattering letter to lord Charlemont, who, in reply, made his consent conditional on the same offer being made to his faithful friend, Henry Grattan. The suggestion was at once complied with.

We have next to mention an incident of lord Charlemont's life, which must, at the time of its occurrence, have been more peculiarly an unmixed gratification to his characteristic tastes, and should now be commemorated as an honour and a distinction more noble and permanent than can ever be found in the transient vicissitudes of political revolution. In 1786, he was elected president of the Royal Irish Academy, an institution which—next to, or rather concurrently with, the university of Dublin—has done more to raise the character of Ireland and Irishmen among the more civilized nations of Europe, than all other causes, of whatever kind. We cannot consent to give our account of this highly distinguished institution in the close of a memoir; it is complicated with too many illustrious recollections, and too many truly glorious results. We shall therefore find a more appropriate place, in which these details may be less interrupted, and less an interruption. The Royal Irish Academy was, like many other institutions of the same kind, the fruit of repeated, and till then, unsuccessful

effort on the part of eminent literary and scientific men, to establish some centre for communication and concert, in which the various branches of human inquiry might impart mutual light, and by comparison and juxtaposition, be seen in their relative positions to the whole, or to each other—a thought expressed in the preface to the first volume of the Transactions, and amply verified in the comprehensive and harmonious range of modern science. We shall only here add, that it was the child of the university, of which its earliest working members were the most distinguished fellows, and from which it has ever since derived its principal constituency; so that it may, indeed, be not unaptly compared to the main outlet from which the streams of academic research are communicated to the world—a relation equally honourable to both. The first sitting of the academy appears from its Transactions to have taken place in 1785, and its first published essay was “An account of the Observatory belonging to Trinity College, Dublin, by the Rev. Henry Usher, senior fellow.” The preface to the volume was from the pen of another eminent member of the university, the Rev. Robert Burrowes. The Rev. Matthew Young also communicated some curious and important papers on the quadrature of simple curves, and on the extraction of cubic and other roots. These, with other very able and interesting papers on most branches of human inquiry, filled the first volume, which was published in 1787.

Lord Charlemont did not view the position of president to the academy as a mere honorary distinction, but appeared mostly in his place, and actively co-operated in the objects of the institution. In the first session, he read an essay to prove, from the works of Fazio Delli Uberti, an ancient Florentine writer, the antiquity of the Irish woollen manufacture. He also, in 1789, read an essay on a custom in Lesbos, where the eldest daughter holds, in regard to inheritance, the ordinary rights of primogeniture.

The numerous political occurrences which took place during the remainder of lord Charlemont's life, may, for the present, be passed over, with slight exceptions. He was beginning to feel the approaches of old age; and a constitution never robust, was every year more affected by infirmities, which diminished his activity, and, except on extraordinary occasions, circumscribed his intercourse with the world. His home, nevertheless, continued to be the frequent resort of literature and politics; so that, to the very last, he was enabled to enter efficiently into the best interests of the country.

The volunteers, to the latest moment of their existence, continued to be chief objects of his parental care. Owing to the several causes to which we have already taken due care to call the reader's attention, they had continued slowly to decline from their numerical strength and national importance. While they continued to be objects of secret suspicion and dislike to the government, they had quickly reached that point of transition in which their character became more than questionable to every sober wellwisher to Ireland. Had they been unhappily placed under a less cautious and firm guidance than that of lord Charlemont, it is sufficiently apparent to what they tended. From a patriotic array in defence of Ireland, they had assumed a political existence; and thus transformed, were obviously passing through that well-known



series of changes which end in the manifestation of a power and a will inconsistent with any event but revolution. They had also attained a point in this advance, at which it became as unsafe to attempt to put them down, as to permit their continued existence.

Lord Charlemont made it still his chief care to watch over their diminished and diminishing ranks, until they ceased to have even a nominal existence. In Mr Hardy's ample memoir, we find numerous interesting notices of his lordship's visits to the north, to review his corps; and there is considerable interest in the occasional instances in which the military rank of his lordship, and military character and merits of the volunteers, are recognised by the officers and soldiers of the line. Their casual meetings were attended by the formal exchange of the usual forms observed on such occasions in the army; and upon one occasion, when his lordship passed through Nenagh, on his way to Limerick, there happened to be no volunteers in the town, and a party of the 18th light dragoons, quartered there, insisted on mounting guard at his door during the evening, and next morning escorted him on his way, as far as he would permit. This incident, however, occurred at an early period of the history of the volunteers, while it was judged by the government yet expedient to mask in courteous flattery the fear and suspicion which from first to last this anomalous force was adapted to inspire. At the time which we have now reached, their palmy day had passed—their own indiscretions, and the dexterity of the government, had slowly but surely stripped them of the stamp of constitutional recognition, which had a substantial effect in altering and subduing the revolutionary temper which it could not wholly suppress: there was thus infused, amid all their democratic ardour, a saving sense of a connexion with the government; and the same convention had as useful an influence on the public mind, as well as on the army, into the ranks of which their best materials were presently absorbed. A clinging sentiment of their past importance still held together a feeble and unimposing band, which had ceased to be formidable, and were permitted to exist, because the mandate of suppression might have easily awakened a spirit not yet altogether extinct. Lord Charlemont is represented as still devoting his time and care to this remnant, both for the reasons here stated, and also to prevent their falling into dangerous hands. The decline of the Irish volunteers, thus left to the influence of circumstances, was slow, and the body preserved a languishing existence long after it had ceased to be an instrument of change. In 1790, we find lord Charlemont still engaged in his military duty of reviewing his corps at Armagh. At that time, when other dangerous elements were fast spreading in the social atmosphere, which would have made such a force tenfold more dangerous, it had happily lost its political existence and form, and was receiving from its old commander these attentions which might be described as the last pious offices before its departure. Reflecting on the common feelings of mankind, it will be no impeachment of his lordship's wisdom to surmise that other natural sentiments must have warmed his breast while witnessing the degeneracy of a body of which the power, the splendour, and services, had been the prominent means of his own national exaltation.



Notwithstanding his strong sense of the real dangers attending their transient ascendancy, and the honourable efforts and vigilance by which he had mainly helped to turn away those dangers, it was not in nature that he should not keenly feel the contempt into which they were beginning to fall, and resent the secret and dexterous hostility which had followed them throughout. We cannot help the conviction, that while his lordship still journeyed to perform the once animating office of inspecting and reviewing their dwindled ranks, that he was more or less affected by that deep-seated tenacity of the pride and glory of a better day, which we hold to be inseparable from the heart. With whatever private sentiments he was impressed in his visits to the north, and in the review of the last remains of the volunteer army of Ireland, there can be no doubt of the justness of his opinions on the subject, or of the perfect good sense and true patriotism with which he conducted, to its last moment, a movement which, in its period of strength, he had mainly conducted to govern to the safest and most beneficial results. Such movements have been seldom so directed; and we dwell on the fact, because we consider it his lordship's claim to the grateful recollection of his country.

At this time, his lordship had attained his sixty-second year, and had suffered considerably from infirmities and complaints contracted by a delicate frame, during a life of great activity. He still continued to take a lively interest in the whole conduct of political concerns, and to be actively engaged in most of the main party conflicts, for many years subsequent to those of which the principal incidents have been here related. On the regency question, in 1788, he acted as the leader of the opposition, of which the chief members met at his house, 3d February, 1789, before the opening of the Irish session. He also moved the address to the prince of Wales, requesting him to take upon himself the regency of Ireland. About the same time, his lordship exerted himself with great zeal and activity in the formation of a whig club. This celebrated body may be considered as a revival of the monks of St Patrick, and was similarly composed of gentlemen who were zealous in opposition, and were, or professed to be, zealous for the rights and liberties of Ireland. At the frequent discussions in the house of commons, lord Charlemont was a constant listener, and from his persevering attendance, it was usual to remark that he was more a member of the commons than of the lords. His friends in the commons were at the time in their highest period of strength, effect, and eloquence; and the gratification which he enjoyed from the frequent display of successful wit, eloquence, and reason, not often to be equalled within the walls of a legislative assembly, must, in some degree, have compensated for the painful sensations of regret and mortification which he was doomed to witness, and the fast increasing folly and absurdity of the popular factions which were at the same time disgracing and hazarding the cause for which he was a champion, by rash, extreme, and false pretensions. In a letter to his friend Haliday, some strong expressions escape, which we may cite as indicating the mood of many a subsequent year:—"My nerves, the constant source of all my complaints, are much affected; and, consequently, neither my eyes nor my spirits are as they ought to be. The horrid weather, which

I take to be unparalleled, may possibly contribute to produce these effects on me; but what alleviation in the weather can produce any good effects on those wretches in the county of Armagh? Few things have ever given me so much concern and anxiety as these nasty broils. The fools will undo themselves, and I cannot help it." The most true and wisest patriot that Ireland has ever known, was doomed, in the decline of his days, to see more serious changes for the worse come over the spirit of independence which he had so materially contributed to awaken and to conduct to prosperous results. We shall not prolong this memoir by entering into the details of public proceedings and changes, in which his lordship was but one among many, but shall take up our narrative in other subsequent memoirs, in which we shall be enabled to offer detailed statements of transactions here adverted to in a summary way.

In 1761, it was thought proper by the Irish administration to show their resentment of his lordship's public conduct by an unworthy insult. With this view, for it is hard to imagine any other, they divided the lieutenancy of the county of Armagh into two separate governments. The government of this county had been for more than a century in his lordship's family. The manner of this injury was more injurious than the act, as it was done without the decorum of a notice, and the first intimation to his lordship was from a gentleman who had seen the new appointment in the Gazette. On learning the circumstance, lord Charlemont at once took the spirited course which is described by himself to his friend Haliday:—"Clear in my own mind of the propriety of what I was about to do, and conscious that though the exhibition of family pride be of all other things the most ridiculous, yet that there are occasions when it is criminal not to assert one's own dignity, I immediately wrote to the secretary, signifying to him, that having been informed by the Gazette, &c., I requested of him to give in to the lord-lieutenant my resignation." We add some sentences of an address which he received on the same occasion from Armagh:—"Your lordship was the sole governor of our county in times rather more perilous than the present—in times, shall we say, when the kingdom had no government, or none but that received from the strength, spirit, and wisdom of the people, so often, and with such zealous integrity, informed, advised, and led by your lordship."\*

In 1793, lord Charlemont had to lament the loss of his second son, a promising youth, in his seventeenth year. Many other losses of a similar nature, were, at the same time, beginning to thicken round his declining progress, and to mark the silent approach of the last scene of the eventful drama in which he had been a most distinguished actor.

His latest days were cheered by repeated and honourable marks of the esteem and honour of his country. Among these might be dwelt on the enthusiasm occasioned by his departure for Bath, when the illness of his countess, and his own delicacy, rendered this journey necessary.

But, as his most prevailing sentiment was the love of his country, so no honours could compensate for, and no private afflictions out-

\* This was the address of 1378 freeholders.

weigh, the pain of beholding the then advanced symptoms of national confusion, which, spreading from the French capital as a centre, were growing like an eclipse over all the surrounding shores. The latter days of his own volunteers had been infected by the earliest taint of the revolution; and when, disgraced by the open adoption of its principles and titles, they were finally put down with the consent of their best friends, they had already handed down the fatal taint which was before long to break out in less equivocal forms, and to do more mischief to Ireland than their noblest achievements had done good.

These dark and gloomy details demand a fresh canvass, and must be pursued in future memoirs.

Our last extract from his correspondence will sufficiently serve to trace here the declining period of lord Charlemont. "Short indeed must this note be; for I am ill able to write, and though from having swallowed the bark of a Peruvian forest, the malady is now a good deal mitigated, still I am so depressed, that neither my head nor my eyes will obey, and second my wish of a long conversation with you. Bodily disease, and bodily pain, must always affect the mind, and more especially a mind already sore, from various causes, but particularly from an incessant and painful contemplation of the melancholy and alarming state to which is now reduced that country, which has been ever so dear to my heart; and that too, not only from the wretched mismanagement of others, but in a great measure from her own fault. To you I need not say how ardently I have ever loved my country. In consequence of that love, I have courted her; I have even married her, and taken her for life; and she is now turned out a shrew—tormenting herself, and all her nearest connexions. But no more of this, for indeed I can write no more."

The sufferings of lord Charlemont were alleviated still by the cultivation of polite literature, and by the varied gratifications belonging to the cultivation of the fine arts. On these topics, his letters display to the last a keen interest and a discriminating judgment. Nor should we omit to observe that the peculiar refinement of a cultivated and informed taste is perceptibly accompanied and set off to great advantage by the uniform tone of the most refined and warm affections. Indeed, the truth of his patriotism (a virtue mostly questionable,) is in him attested by the uniform and thorough consistency of his entire conduct and sentiments in all things. Had he never taken part in public affairs—such a man must have been by nature a patriot: for he was a good and true man in all his human and social affections.

It is not our intention to enter here on the gloomy interval of affairs which overclouded his latter years. Even in the latest stages of an infirm old age, he shook off the impeding languor which would have tied most men to their beds, to hurry to his post in the serious alarms of '96.

The discussions upon the question of the Union found him at his post, fervent in mind, though already suffering in the latest stages of bodily decline. With many of the best and ablest Irishmen of his day, he took part against that great measure. The protracted agitation of spirit and nerve thus kept up during a struggle of the most



exciting nature, completed the disruption of his constitution. His appetite departed—his limbs swelled, and it was sorrowfully admitted by his friends and family that his death could not be far off. He expired in his 70th year, on the 4th August, 1799. The following epitaph written by himself was found among his papers:—

MY OWN EPITAPH.

Here lies the body of  
JAMES, EARL OF CHARLEMONT,  
A sincere, zealous, and active friend,  
To his country.  
Let posterity imitate him in that alone,  
and forget  
His manifold errors.

His lordship was advanced to the earldom in 1763, without solicitation, and, as a well deserved tribute of the public services rendered by his activity, spirit and prudence, in the troubles of that time. In 1768 he married Miss Hickman.

Among the numerous distinguished men of his day, attempts have been made to assign his lordship's relative position. The rare and eminent combination of high and useful qualities which we have already described, was, with the advantages of station and property, such as to place him in a central position among the great men who are to be numbered of his party. The position is generally allowed, but we incline to think that the merits to which it was felt to belong, are underrated by his lordship's admirers. That his talents were not of the comprehensive and powerful order of some of his gifted contemporaries cannot be disputed; but there is a want of judgment shown in the insufficient estimate of the just discernment and pervading sagacity, which all his letters and recorded acts plainly indicate from first to last. His opinions did not receive the development of pamphlet or speech—nor was he by circumstances led to any of those elaborate displays of political talent which have their origin more in ambition than patriotism. Single in his motives, at the same time shrinking from such displays, his lordship was too happy to find and put in motion the talents of others. But if it be recollected with what wholeness he devoted his mind to the politics of his day, it is too much to assume that he did not maintain in these the same qualities which are in other things plainly seen to be the features of his mind. As for the admission of Mr Hardy, that his lordship was no statesman—we should be much inclined to make a similar admission for nearly the whole of the distinguished circle of public men who were engaged in the same cause.

## Henry Flood.

BORN A.D. 1732.—DIED A.D. 1791.

THE family of Flood has been traced into Kent, whence the ancestors of Mr Flood, the immediate subject of notice in this memoir, came into Ireland, early in the sixteenth century. The ancestor from whom the

Irish branch is lineally traced, was Sir Thomas Flood, who bore several offices of honour and trust in England, under Henry VIII., and Elizabeth. His lineal descendant, Major Francis Flood, came to Ireland with his regiment, and bore an active part in the wars in both kingdoms, during the great rebellion. This gentleman married a Miss Warden, the heiress of a considerable estate in the county of Kilkenny. From this marriage, three families descended—settled respectively in Farmley, Floodhall, and Paulstown.

Of Major Flood's sons, the eldest, who was named Warden, from his mother's family name, was chief-justice of the king's bench, and father to Henry, of whom we are more particularly to speak. Henry Flood was born in 1732. By the death of his brother and sister he became an only child. It may be fairly presumed, that his early education was attended to with a care proportioned to his expectation, as the sole inheritor of large estates; though we must here add that his biographers advert to some informalities attending the union of his parents, such as on a subsequent occasion to lead to a verdict of illegitimacy.

He entered college when he had completed his sixteenth year. The conspicuous station held by his father placed him in the whirl of gaiety and dissipation, and he was at once diverted from the studies which led at that time to academic distinction. It was probably to move him from the attraction of influences which could not fail, in many important respects, to be detrimental at his tender age, that, three years after, his father removed him to Oxford, where he was placed under the care of Dr Markham, afterwards archbishop of York. Under the active personal influence of this worthy man and excellent scholar, he began to apply himself with diligence: much also was attributed to an influence often felt by those who, with the ambition and power of strong abilities, may happen to have neglected those acquirements which are always soon found to be essential to their successful use: the occasional opportunities of entering into the society of men of profound and extensive knowledge, and of listening to discussions in which something more than mere natural dexterity and untrained activity of intellect was wanting to enable him to bear part, effectually excited him to industrious and persevering study.

After two years' residence in Oxford, he graduated. His classical proficiency and his natural powers of language were in the same interval indicated by his poetic compositions, and by highly successful translations from the great masterpieces of Greek and Roman orators.

Having left Oxford, Mr Flood entered his name in the Temple, and some years were passed in assiduous devotion to legal studies. After which, having altogether spent seven years in England, he returned to stand for the county of Kilkenny during the administration of the duke of Bedford. He was elected, took his seat, and judiciously abstained from engaging prematurely in the debates. He justly felt that a full acquaintance with the common details of parliamentary business, would be essential to the most favourable display of his abilities. The dissolution of parliament soon followed, and he was re-elected for the

same county. On this occasion, among other friends, we find lord Charlemont actively engaged in endeavours to secure his return.

Mr Flood was first called up in the house, in 1761, by a motion of Mr William Gerard Hamilton, that the Portuguese, then at war with Spain, might be permitted to raise in Ireland six regiments of the Romish persuasion. The speech of Hamilton has been described as one of unequalled effect; among those who replied, Mr Flood was the most applauded: he spoke from the Opposition benches, and attacked the whole administration of the government with so much severity, as to call forth lively demonstrations of popular approbation and ministerial resentment.

In the same year he married lady Francis Maria Beresford, with whom he obtained a large fortune, and a high connexion. His father, chief-justice Flood, settled his estates upon him on the occasion, and a bequest from his uncle put him in actual possession of a considerable independence.

Under these circumstances, his mind seems to have undergone a transient change from the more ambitious desires of public life, to the tastes for rural and agricultural occupations. He retired with his wife to Farmley, where he cultivated his muse and his turnips, and formed an interesting centre for much of the talent and literature of the day. Among the many well-known names which frequently occur in the record of this period of his life, that of Henry Grattan, and Sir Hercules Langrishe, are to be distinguished. The marriage of Mr Grattan's sister to Mr Bushe of Kilfane, made him a frequent visitor in that part of the county of Kilkenny. Between him and Mr Flood, a close intimacy soon commenced: they entered together into the study of politics and oratory, in both of which, Mr Flood had already made the proficiency of an adept. They wrote and communicated their compositions to each other; they argued and often contended together in formal harangue. Private theatricals, which had long been fashionable in the most distinguished circles of society in Ireland, were introduced at Knocktopher, Kilfane, and Farmley; and the principal parts acted by persons whose names were soon to find the most conspicuous places in the history of their time. These theatricals form so very marked a feature of social life in that period, that we shall further on endeavour to trace them in their line and progress. Upon one of these occasions, Mr Flood acted Macbeth to Mr Grattan's Macduff.

On the new election which took place after the passing of the octennial bill, Mr Flood had an unhappy quarrel with Mr Agar, his colleague in the representation of Callan. It terminated according to the barbarous custom of the day, in a hostile meeting at Holyhead, in which Agar was slightly wounded. Agar who was the challenger, was vexed at having missed Mr Flood, and soon after challenged him to a second meeting. The following letter was written by an eye-witness of this fatal duel, and contains the fullest, as well as most authoritative statement we can offer:—

*Mr Bushe to Mr Grattan.*

September, 1769.

My dear Harry,—I must postpone everything to inform you, that on Friday last, a duel was fought between Harry Flood and Mr Agar,



the elder, in Dunmore Park, near Kilkenny, in which Mr Agar was unfortunately killed. As Mr Flood was not the challenger, and as it was out of his power to avoid it, he has nothing to reproach himself with. The cause was a case of pistols belonging to Mr Agar, which one Keogh lost at Burn church, in the riot about ten months ago. I hear that the unfortunate gentleman had often asked Mr Flood about them, who always "said he had them not, and was not accountable for them." But on Friday, they produced a challenge, to my great surprise; for if there were any offence, it was as much an offence any day these ten months as it was on that day. They stood at about fourteen yards asunder. Before they fired, Mr Agar questioned Mr Flood about the pistols in a threatening and offensive manner. Mr Flood answered very deliberately, "You know I will not answer you while you ask me in that manner." Mr G. Bushe, who was Mr Flood's friend, said something to Mr Agar to induce him to ask in another manner, and not to bring such an affair upon himself so needlessly,—but without effect. He laid down one pistol, and rested the other on his arm to take aim. Both Mr G. B., and Mr Roth, his own friend, called to him to fire fairly.—N.B., besides the unfairness of using a rest, it was particularly unfair at that time; for Mr A. had proposed they should stand alongside a quickset hedge, but Mr Roth declared *there should be no levelling*. Upon their calling out, he desisted, and took another posture, and fired first, and missed. He then took up his other pistol, and then said to Mr Flood, "Fire, fire you scoundrel!" Mr Flood thereupon presented his pistol, which he held all this time with the muzzle turned upwards, and shot Mr A. through the heart. Mr A.'s left breast was towards him, Mr A. being left-handed. He expired in a few minutes afterwards, without speaking anything articulate.\*

On this unfortunate event it was necessary that Mr Flood should stand his trial before he could appear in public, and the delay by which this object was retarded has been attributed by some to the desire of the lord-lieutenant to keep him out of the way during some discussion in which his talents were feared. It was the object of Mr Flood to be tried by a special commission, instead of waiting for the spring assizes; and this is the fair history of the delay. But it would be inconsistent with our duty to omit here to notice distinctly, that this transaction is an instance of the exceeding laxity which then prevailed in the administration of justice in Ireland. The special commission which Mr Flood and his friends were so desirous to secure, was not precisely what is ordinarily understood by the term. And the reader who is made aware of the difficulties which were at first thrown in the way of such an arrangement, may not be aware that the object sought was a deviation from the regular course of justice, such as could not now be named without scandal to the high judicial integrity of modern times. It was no less than an arrangement to pack the bench, for the acquittal of a species of homicide licensed by public opinion in those barbarous days. A few extracts will sufficiently explain this. The first letter on the subject is one from lord Charle-

\* Life of H. Grattan, by his son.

mont, in reply to one from Mr Flood; the following sentence will explain Mr Flood's request,—“I spoke [to the chancellor] of your letters as very sensible and ingenious, but think that you a little mistook Blackstone. The writ *de malo* relates to a commission of gaol delivery, but that which you desire is a commission of *oyer* and *terminer*.” Through the whole of October this point was urged with indefatigable zeal, and the difficulties which interposed might illustrate the irregular nature of the proposal; but this point is fully ascertained by lord Charlemont's incidental repetition of the chancellor's words. Having begged of the chancellor to apply to the lord-lieutenant, he goes on to repeat,—“I certainly will, and everything in my power shall be done; in the mean time, I would have you to know of Mr Flood whether he has any objection to the judges Henn and Smith, who, as the youngest judges, will probably be appointed. For if he has, I shall take care that others shall be sent in their place.” It is difficult to assume that the lord chancellor was ignorant of the infamous nature of the proceeding which is plainly enough intimated in this extract. But it is also evident that there occurred some seasonable interposition to prevent such a disgrace of the judicial office: whether the obstacle arose from the privy council, or, what is far more likely, from the judges themselves, this wretched treaty was interrupted when it appeared to have been settled to the satisfaction of all parties. A letter from lord Charlemont announced that the chancellor had not succeeded in discovering any precedent for the species of commission required, and that matters were quite at a stand. The event was, that Mr Flood was tried and acquitted at the regular spring assizes in Kilkenny.

At this period of his life, it is generally agreed that Mr Flood held the very first place as a public speaker. Our means of arriving at any very precise estimate of his style, are few and imperfect; the reports of the public debates were then but casual, and confined simply to the line of argument pursued by the speaker, with a few occasional expressions of more peculiar force. It was a time when the art of rhetorical eloquence had been recently introduced into this country, and was beginning to be cultivated in the Irish house by a few eminent speakers. Among these, Flood rapidly obtained the palm of unrivalled superiority, and it may readily be concluded that he was forcible, perspicuous, and argumentative. His command of language, as well as of the varied turns of style, and forms of rhetoric, seems, from the few specimens which are preserved, to have been copious and ready. An extract from a sketch attributed to Sir H. Langrishe, praises him in these terms:—“Indeed, upon whatever subject this champion of our liberty speaks, he does so with such knowledge, accuracy and perspicuity, that one would imagine *that* subject had been the particular and chief object of his inquiry. Does he make calculations?—what mathematician more exact. Does he plead his country's cause?—what breast does not glow with patriotism; he seems nearly to approach that great original Demosthenes—whom he so well understands. He has all his fine brevity and perspicuity.”\*

\* Cited in the Life of Flood, by W. Flood, Esq., 1838.



These praises, though rather too obviously partaking more of the warmth of the zealous friend than of critical discrimination, may perhaps be taken as an approximate description of the general merits of Mr Flood, and of the place which he held in the estimation of contemporary taste.

The latter end of lord Townshend's administration was harassed by numerous literary attacks, which may perhaps, without much inaccuracy be regarded as the precursors of a more serious and effective display of opposition to the existing state of things. Among these may be distinguished a collection of satirical pieces, published under the name of "*Barateriana*," of which the fundamental notion was taken from *Don Quixote*, and in which the lord-lieutenant was represented in the character of *Sancho*. This was the joint production of *Langrishe*, *Grattan*, and *Mr Flood*. Among these there are many letters which have been ascertained on the clearest evidence to have been the composition of *Mr Flood*: they are distinguished by their copious command of topics, and by the prompt ingenuity with which every topic is made available for the purpose of the writer. They do no discredit to the character of *Mr Flood* as an argumentative orator. But with these allowances, some criticism of a different character must be mixed: while these letters by their general ability, do high credit to their author, they clearly prove that *Mr Flood* was not, as some of his admirers have fancied, the author of the letters of *Junius*. A comparison between the two styles is facilitated and justified by the plain and undisguised imitation of *Junius*, which pervades the letters known to have come from the hand of *Mr Flood*; and as well marked an inferiority in the use of the same weapons and in the same way, as strongly leads to the conclusion that *Mr Flood* was not *Junius*. As we do not believe that such a notion now exists in any quarter, it is not necessary to notice it further. Indeed to any one who has attentively read the history of *Mr Flood* and his times, and the letters of *Junius*, it is scarcely necessary to observe, that there is in the latter a scope of sentiments and habitual associations, widely separated both in general character and particular detail, from the whole known habits and intercourse of *Mr Flood*. But we must not here pursue the subject.

In 1773, *Mr Flood* paid a visit to England, where he received the attentions due to his character and distinguished qualifications. On this occasion, it is said to have been principally his object to impress lord North with opinions favourable to the commerce of Ireland, and also upon the subject of a tax on absentees.

In 1775, when lord Harcourt held the office of chief governor in the Irish administration, *Mr Flood* was pressed to accept the vice-treasurership, one of the highest and most profitable offices under the crown in Ireland. To this, after some demur and considerable negotiation, he yielded his consent. The step was, as might be expected at the time, objected to among his political connexions, and afterwards severely stigmatized by his political adversaries. It would be vain to hope that conduct, which can, without any strain upon the ordinary and well-known principles of human action, be ascribed to the influence of either of two very opposite classes of motives, can now, with much certainty, be assigned to either. The case, as it may be stated, against *Mr Flood*, will be found in the strongest form in *Mr*



Grattan's celebrated invective, to which, brief as it is, little can be added or subtracted to make a strong *prima facie* case of party dereliction. On the other side, it must, in fairness, be confessed that, in Mr Flood's defence of himself on a subsequent night, the charges of Mr Grattan receive favourable and not improbable explanations. After fairly considering both, it will be confessed that the statements on either part come, in point of plain and tangible fact, nearly to the same, and that the true question remains as to the balance of the probability in favour of the patriotic or the corrupt motives. Every point of Mr Grattan's statement may be answered by the solution of a patriotic, honourable, and expedient motive; and every point of Mr Flood's by a probable imputation. It was unquestionable that Mr Flood accepted of a lucrative office at a time when he and the party to which he was understood to belong were essentially an opposition; but it is obvious enough that there was room to conclude that, in so doing, he was stepping into the very position in which—to all appearance, and, considering the then state of affairs—he might find the readiest means to serve his country. If, however, the fact be urged that, during the period in which he held office, his conduct as a member of the house was remarkably altered, that he became silent on most questions, and observably evaded others; the answer is ready,—that this was an essential condition of the part he had taken. His opposition to the government in the house could be at that time of small avail; while his influence in the privy council was of much to prevent or modify such measures as were thought inadmissible by the friends of Ireland. It is, after all allowances, consistent with our theory of human nature, to observe that both classes of motive very usually exist in the mind,—in which elevated and low sentiments deeply co-exist and curiously combine; and it rarely occurs that there is a course of conduct for which mean motives cannot be found or good motives pleaded. Upon the whole, therefore, when such questions arise, we think the general tenor of the life and conduct of the individual may be thrown into the scale. And if, on looking at the result, the conduct has led to actual good, it would be but fair to allow that such good may have been foreseen and intended by the actor. With this view we shall here conclude that, in the acceptance of a lucrative office, Mr Flood satisfied himself that he might thereby serve his country effectually, and that his conduct in office was not inconsistent with such a view. The charge of having voted with government on mere questions of party would be frivolous; on many great questions opposition would, under circumstances, be unavailing as well as inexpedient, which on several occasions, in which something was to be effected by influence and firmness, it must be admitted that Mr Flood came forward as the adviser or even the opponent of the cabinet, and rendered important services, some of which we shall presently notice. For a more detailed view, we must refer the curious reader to the statements made by Mr Grattan and Mr Flood, as the fullest and clearest we have been enabled to obtain.\*

In the same year, lord Harcourt's government was farther strength-

\* Mr Grattan's will be found at full length in the memoir published by his son. Mr Flood's defence may be read at length in his life by Warden Flood, Esq.

ened by the acquisition of two other important allies; Mr Hussey Burgh, who was raised to the office of prime sergeant, and Mr Hutchinson, who obtained the still higher, though somewhat inappropriate, honour of being appointed provost. These appointments, together with that of Mr Flood, were censured by the earl of Charlemont. Of this, so far as regards Mr Flood, there is sufficient proof in the published letters of this nobleman to him. Mr Hardy has, however, rashly affirmed that an entire cessation of intercourse between these distinguished persons was the immediate consequence. This is plainly disproved by the subsequent correspondence which has been published, and which unequivocally manifests the unbroken continuation of the most affectionate and cordial intercourse. The brother of lord Charlemont was, in this year, lost in the passage from England to Dublin, and the borough which he represented, being in the possession of the earl, would have, but for the incidents here noticed, been offered to the acceptance of Mr Flood. Under the circumstances, it is needless to explain that this act of friendship had become incompatible with the public opinions and station of the noble earl. He expressed clearly, but kindly, his opinion as to the objectionable character of the step which Mr Flood was about to take, in thus—though with the most honourable motives—committing himself to the stream of influences, so charged with imputation and seduction, and significantly quoted a passage from Virgil:—

——— *Facilis descensus Averni;*

*Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis;*

*Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,*

*Hoc opus, hic labor est.*

In his acceptance of the vice-treasurership, one of the motives assigned by Mr Flood was the desire to render this office accessible to Irishmen, as it had been till then exclusively filled by Englishmen. He also made some stipulations in favour of Ireland. In the council he lent his aid to obtain a limited mutiny bill—the rejection of altered money bills, and the important concession that privy council bills should not be defended by the crown.

Mr Flood held office during the administrations of lords Harcourt and Buckingham. In 1780, in the end nearly of the latter, he resigned on the declared ground that the line of policy contemplated by him was not that which the government had adopted. When the parliament met he stood forward, without hesitation, in the character of an opposition orator, and was complimented by Mr Ponsonby, “who rejoiced to see the right honourable gentleman, after an eclipse of seven years, burst forth in such a blaze of eloquence.” On this expression, Mr Flood observed,—“The honourable gentleman has said that I am emerged from a seven years’ eclipse. It is true I supported lord Harcourt’s administration; but was I eclipsed, when, on several occasions, I went not with them, and stated my reasons for doing so? I also supported lord Buckingham. On that eventful day when a free trade was demanded, was I eclipsed? When a bill of rights was the subject of debate, did I shrink from the question?”

We have already noticed at some length, and shall again be compelled to enter more largely into the discussions on the repeal of 6



George I., and the other accompanying acts of concession, which gave independence to the Irish legislature. We have also noticed the address on that occasion proposed by Mr Grattan, expressive of the consent and acceptance which the measure received from the Irish house of commons. To this address Mr Flood proposed an objection, which led to a warm and interesting debate. The offer of the British government went no farther than a simple repeal of the obnoxious statute; Mr Flood contended for a declaratory act expressly renouncing the right of binding Ireland by the English parliament. And in truth, reasoning directly upon the facts, it seems not easy to evade the force of Mr Flood's objection: for the evil had arisen from mere usurpation; nor could there be any security in the mere silence of statute law against the recurrence of similar usurpations, unless in the positive barrier raised by an express declaration of the British legislature. The changes of some years might materially change the relative advantages of the two countries; and, up to that time, there had not been any indication in the conduct of the British legislature, from which it could with certainty be inferred that the consideration of justice to the commercial or legislative rights or interests of Ireland would operate as a restraint when occasion should again chance to favour such usurpations. On the other hand, the general spirit of the age had been widely changed; the common sentiments of the British nation had been enlarged and enlightened, and Ireland had also made many important steps in moral and commercial advance. There could be little chance of any act founded on the conditions of a darker state of things ever again recurring. The mere existence of such evils could not be referred to as a ground of such apprehensions for the future, because every one can at once understand how different is the temper which operates to maintain a present established evil from that which would originate the same. Thus contemplated, such an apprehension seemed to imply, that, after the emancipation of her commerce and legislature, Ireland was to stand still. But while we fully admit that the practical expediency of an express declaration was not very considerable, we must yet insist on the wisdom of Mr Flood's proposal. The declaration which he required was assuredly the proper completion of the measure proposed: and as it could really add nothing to the actual concession, unless on the supposition of a fraudulent intent, —there could be nothing of the nature of unreasonable exaction in a demand that conceded nothing, and sacrificed nothing. Some arguments of no slight cogency for Mr Flood's view, were drawn from the known circumstances of the discussion which had occurred in the British legislature, in which great reluctance had been shown by several eminent statesmen to concede the principle of right. The contest was maintained with great ability on both sides; and Mr Flood, though foiled at first, eventually carried his point.

This eventual success of Mr Flood was promoted by circumstances. A few weeks after the repeal of the act 6 George I., Ireland was named in a British act, which laid some restraint on the cotton trade. It was also favoured by a decision by lord Mansfield on an Irish writ of error, which brought into prominent notice the appellant jurisdiction of the British house of peers in Ireland. The case



decided by lord Mansfield, had, it is true, been lodged before the repeal of the statute 6 George I. But, in giving his reason in support of his decision, his lordship asserted the right on more general grounds. He alleged "that he knew of no law depriving the British court of its vested jurisdiction." Lord Mansfield's anxiety to maintain that jurisdiction was accounted for by the assertion that he had large investments in Irish mortgages, by which means one per cent. additional was obtained for his money.\* Soon after, an act was passed in the British parliament, regulating the importation of sugars from St Domingo to all the king's dominions in Europe: as such an act had a constructive application to Ireland, it had the effect of raising a commotion in this country. The excitement caused by these several incidents was increased, and a strong sense of insufficient security confirmed by lord Abingdon's motion in the English house of lords, in which he distinctly stated the opinion that the king and parliament of England had no right to renounce the jurisdiction of England over Ireland.

These excitements were of themselves sufficient to make the British government aware that something further was to be done; and, in the following session, they brought in an express act of renunciation, 23 George III., "for removing and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or might arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the parliament and courts of Ireland, in matters of legislation and judicature," &c., &c. Of this act the whole language was clear and unequivocal, and embodied all the objected points with the utmost fulness.

The contest of opinion, which broke the harmony of the popular party, was, nevertheless, far from being ended. Mr Flood's argument had, in fact, been acted upon; while Mr Grattan, and those who thought with him, continued to retain their first opinion in favour of the sufficiency of a simple repeal of the previous act 6 George I. In fact, the opposition which, sustained by the external pressure of the volunteers, and backed by a liberal administration in England, had effected for Ireland such constitutional victories, now began to lose strength by the important ordinary operation of human passions. It cannot be overlooked that the changes of administration which had restored some eminent men to the ranks of the Irish opposition, had thus also infused a principle of division. Nor can we conceal our conviction of the effects now resulting from the jealousy which almost of necessity existed between Mr Flood and Mr Grattan, and diffused itself widely among their adherents. The protracted discussions upon the above measure had not only the effect of deeply imbittering against each other the minds of these two eminent men, who were thus directly placed in a state of competition for public favour, but it also infused a vague distrust through the country as to the sincerity of England. With this a still more operative excitement arose; the majority in the Irish Parliament had decided for the sufficiency of a measure, which the subsequent act of the British legislature had admitted to be unsatisfactory. Here, in the moment of apparent triumph, was full material for civil commotion, suspicion, and discontent. The

\* Barrington.

volunteers were again roused into action, and the opinion that the Irish parliament did not represent the people, became the prominent matter of complaint.

With the volunteers Mr Flood now obtained the highest popularity; and when, very shortly after, the memorable quarrel between him and Mr Grattan occurred, he was addressed by them on that occasion, to express their sense of his services, and to censure the uncalled-for and unmerited severity of Mr Grattan's attack. We shall not here enter into the further details of this period of Mr Flood's life. They have in part been briefly noticed already, and shall be farther stated in our memoir of Mr Grattan. Of the quarrel here adverted to it is necessary to offer an outline.

The brief administration of lord Temple was succeeded by that of lord Northington, in 1783, who was appointed with the celebrated coalition ministry in the same year. A new parliament met in Ireland on the 14th October. In this the Irish had shown their gratitude by the exclusion of both their great leaders, and Mr Flood and Mr Grattan were each compelled to have recourse to boroughs for their seats. About a fortnight after the meeting of parliament, Sir H. Cavendish moved that the state of the kingdom required every practicable retrenchment. Mr Flood, as had been his wont, entered into some very severe comments on the government, and proposed, as an amendment, that the "country demanded retrenchment." He was replied to by Mr Grattan, whose comments were tinged with some severity. A mutual jealousy had been long growing up between these eminent men, and both were prepared to seize on any occasion for the discharge of their animosity. During the previous year the materials of bitter recrimination had been collecting in their minds; and their personal hostility was kept alive, and armed by a wide difference of political principle. Of these motives we shall be in a better condition to speak when engaged in the memoir of Mr Grattan, because we shall then enter into many details, which we here omit. For the same reason, we defer the full narration of the incidents of this memorable debate. Mr Grattan, as we have stated, replied in a tone of sarcasm;—Mr Flood claimed his right to reply to a personal charge, and, in defending himself, retorted with a degree of acrimonious point and with imputations so very personal and galling, that he probably felt, as the last sentence of his reply expresses, a triumphant sense of having crushed his antagonist.—"I have now done. Give me leave to say, if the gentleman enters often into this sort of colloquy with me, he will not have much to boast of at the end of the session." Mr Flood's invective—for such it was—was indeed highly creditable to his oratorical reputation, and contained passages, which, had they even been the result of elaborate preparation, would still deserve the praise of highly finished composition. We shall offer but an example:—"A man of warm imagination and brilliant fancy will sometimes be dazzled with his own ideas, and may for a moment fall into error; but a man of sound head could not make so egregious a mistake, and a man of an honest heart could not persist in it after it was discovered." Among other innuendoes of the most cutting severity was one which could not fail to provoke, and, indeed, demanded the utmost power of retort. The



reply of Mr Grattan remains yet unparalleled among the reports of parliamentary encounter, for its condensed and compendious severity. Mr Flood was for the moment completely bewildered by its overpowering effect; a fact which is perfectly apparent in the few sentences of incoherent reply which have been preserved. The two gentlemen, after having for two hours been allowed to discharge their whole indignation upon each other by a house of commons, which entered with all the keen interest of a cockpit into this display of rival force, were, from something of the same spirit, suffered, after it was over, to steal away for the purpose of following up their quarrel in the way most usual at the period. After a little time had passed in the confusion which immediately followed, orders were given for the arrest of the parties. Mr Flood was taken, but made his escape from the sheriffs.

A challenge from Mr Flood ensued; but, after some days spent in negotiation, they were both served with a warrant from the king's bench, and bound over to keep the peace towards each other for two years. A few days after, Mr Flood was allowed by the house to enter into a formal vindication of his character, in which he displayed very considerable eloquence and talent. The quarrel just related had the effect of putting an end to the acquaintance of these two eminent orators. The kindliness of Mr Flood's temper has been exemplified by the courtesy with which, upon a subsequent occasion, he saluted Mr Grattan when they chanced to pass each other in the streets; this advance was, however, so coldly received, that he took care not to repeat it. He also presided at some meetings at which resolutions complimentary to Mr Grattan passed.

We should next have to relate the incidents of the convention of delegates, in which Mr Flood bore a distinguished part, had we not already given as much space to the subject as can well be afforded in this volume.\* In this, as in the incident previously mentioned, there is among those respectable writers who have noticed these passages of his life a very remarkable difference of opinion. We should not hesitate to sum their arguments, direct or inferential, and endeavour to cast the balance between their opinions for or against Mr Flood, but that, in truth, we consider them, as reasoning, to be quite inconclusive. We have already shown that the peculiar course of conduct pursued for a considerable number of years by Mr Flood, can be within the ordinary analogies of human nature, referred to either of two very opposite classes of motives. His deportment in this latter instance carries with it the same ambiguity. It must depend on the general estimate of his character, otherwise formed, to which class his conduct is to be referred. The public professions of men, and the compliments of partisans or friends, go for nothing in such an estimate. There is scarcely on record a course of action in which the invidious or the biassed cannot find strong grounds for imputation; or which the agent himself cannot set forth in lofty colours.

With respect to Mr Flood's motion for parliamentary reform, it may be said for Mr Flood that such reform was wanting; while the pernicious nature of the unconstitutional resource by which it was, on

\* Life of Charlemont.



this occasion, sought to be obtained, was not equally apparent. The ultimate tendency of the principles which were then in their first development, was only made known by the experience of subsequent events; nor was it sufficiently self-evident, for most intelligences, that popular interference has a narrow limit to its powers for good. It may doubtless have appeared to Mr Flood that the state of Ireland was still such as to warrant the application of an irregular force: like a far greater man (Mr Fox) he was more a theorist in political science, than a profound observer of those laws, according to which the movements of men and nations must ever be governed: his reasoning was that of a lawyer and a casuist, and built on the dogmas, maxims, and statutes, but not studied precedents of jurists and political writers: he belonged, with some favourable allowance, to that most eloquent class of public men who will argue on an abstract case, while the facts are momentarily bursting from the grasp of application. From such an estimate some deduction may, it is true, be made, and some further apology for Mr Flood may be found in the consideration that he had hitherto lived and acted in the chaos and confusion of a state, in which the government and the opposition were unregulated, and in which the only prospect of a better order of things was in the application of that strong external force from which so much had been attained: and he may have felt justified in endeavouring to obtain it by the use of the same means which had already been found successful to such an extent. This view may be enough for the justification of his conduct on the occasion—so far as such a justification ought now to be sought. Should any one consider it wholly unnecessary, we must answer, that, on an attentive consideration of the state of things then sufficiently noticeable, there must arise a strong impression that Mr Flood's conduct on the occasion stated, was actuated by no regard to any consideration beyond the impulse of certain strong personal feelings. If he was not goaded by sentiments of jealous rivalry and disappointed ambition, he was more or less than man—he had seen his vast popularity ebb, and the unrivalled championship, the thunder of the senate, pass into the hands of a junior,—a rival, and a reputed enemy. On the other hand, he had been ill-treated by the government. Such a position was laden with the elements of desperation. The force of which he put himself at the head, was the same that had prostrated and paralyzed the forces of the Castle, and floated his rival into wealth, influence, and fame. Such motives may have been beneath his pride, and unworthy of his understanding; but, while we frankly admit the possible uprightness of his motive, we must observe, as honestly, that we cannot pay the same compliment to his understanding. It was not a time for the further pressure of parliamentary reform in this country; no merely constitutional reform would here have answered any purpose, save as an argument for some further step; but a reform carried at the point of the bayonet could only have the effect of undoing all that had already been effected. The house of commons, which should have adopted any resolution under the circumstances already described, would have wanted something more than reform. The error in principle does not admit of discussion; it is too obvious; but, in point of policy, there was, in our opinion, an error not so much on

the surface at that time, though plain enough to those who look back along the course of after events. It is a consideration on which we have already entered at some length. The social state and the political constitution of this kingdom were advancing with unequal steps. The leading statesmen of the popular party took up their notions and principles from English books, the British constitution, and the debates in the British parliament: when they harangued on the affairs of Ireland they were unconsciously thinking of England. They who now read their speeches have no very precise notion of the state of things to which they were intended to apply. A great step in advance had been made,—when the independence of the judges, the free trade, and the independence of parliament had been secured. For the sound working of these measures, something more was wanting. It is a mistake into which statesmen are but too liable to fall—the idea that a system of enactments can amount to national prosperity—whereas, on the other hand, every measure in its application is wholly modified by circumstances on which legislation has no power. No freedom or no laws could have secured prosperity or good government to Ireland, or happiness and respectability to the people, until they had first made some advances wholly dependent on peace. We have already taken some pains to show the necessary progress of wealth, prosperity, and civil order, when subject to no interference from popular movements. When once fairly ingrafted, civilization with its consequences depend on quiet, and the workings of law depend on civilization. The tyranny of one stage of civilization drops away link by link, according to a law not in the will of cabinets and councils, but in the hand of nature: laws become obsolete by an insensible course, and opinion works out institutions and enlightened laws by a process nearly as insensible. These effects cannot be, or never were the work of popular will,—an instrument useful in desperate emergencies, but in these alone; useful to vindicate freedom, but not to fit people to be free. In Ireland, the principal want was an interval of quiet; the utmost had been done that national excitement could at the time effect: and the balance of force was visibly shifted. Wise men would have applied their whole strength to secure, to give a rooted existence and a sane working to the new elements of constitutional strength. To promote trade—to improve the condition of the peasantry—to remove the prejudices which operated against the country, and to quiet the turbulence which seemed to justify those prejudices, in a word, to look into the actual state of the Irish people, who were the least cared for, and least consulted for in a struggle for the sake of which they were excited into a state of exasperation, fatal to their own best interests. The spirit of the people had received already some fierce impulses, which a sagacious politician would desire to check; and the public mind was already commencing that most fatal course, which was to receive no effectual check, until it obtained a permanent form, and became the parent of all our subsequent calamities. The impression was then just beginning to be communicated of an unreclaimable hostility to order and law—a temper which would find cause of complaint in any change of circumstances, and which could only be civilized by an iron domination; and which by the impression of national fickleness and faithlessness



which it communicated, effectually drove commercial confidence, and the outlay of capital from a country which offered the best advantages to industry. Such charges, were it necessary, we should be among the most strenuous to repel. But in that day, lessons were taught in Ireland, which have never since ceased to be evil.

Whatever conclusion may be arrived at by the historian, on the conduct of Mr Flood, according to the aspect in which the events and politics of the time may present them to his view: whether his actions are to be explained by the impetuous ambition of a proud spirit, disappointed in its aims, and jealous of its old pre-eminence; or of mistaken or just views of national interest, or of the mingled and complicated tissue of human impulses, motives and opinions which can be traced in the course of most men of whom distinct note has been ever taken and preserved: one thing will suggest itself to most readers of his history;—that he was at this time in a position, in which if he was susceptible of the feelings of declining influence and disputed popularity, they must have been often and painfully excited in his breast. The beginning, and all the earlier years of his career had been such as to place him first among those to whom the kingdom looked as the champions of her rights and interests: and an undisputed pre-eminence of political talents, must at the same time have suggested hopes no less ambitious than we may admit them to have been honourable. But he was in his age, and under the infliction of a painful infirmity, with declining health and abated physical powers, —doomed to the pains, anxieties, and jealousy of a strenuous rivalry with youth, enthusiasm, and transcendent talents. If, as we can readily admit, he was firm in conscious integrity, he must have withered under the painful sense of misrepresentation: if, as is not utterly impossible, the reproaches of a rival had found any echo in his breast, he must have been also touched by other feelings not much less painful; in either case he must have been more than human, if he was not mortified by the defection and dissent of early admirers and followers, the assaults of rivals, and the ultimate results of much labour and many high expectations. If such conjectures, or any part of them have any foundation in truth, the reader will easily comprehend the relief to Mr Flood, which must have grown out of the prospect of being transferred to another scene of effort: a broader and loftier scope for the exertion of his powers was thus presented in prospect: and the dignity of a seat in the British senate appeared more than equivalent to the loss of influence in that of his own country. But such a change offered a still stronger recommendation to feelings wounded by an insult received from the British minister, in advising the king to strike his name off the lists of the privy council.

At this period, Mr Flood entered into treaty with the duke of Chandos for a borough belonging to this nobleman. The duke appears to have been a warm admirer of Mr Flood, and to have belonged to the same political school: there had been some correspondence as well as friendly intercourse between them, of which there are traces at an earlier period, to be found in the printed correspondence of Mr Flood and his friends. In October, 1783, we find a letter to Mr Flood from the duke of Chandos, on the subject of Mr Flood's election to the



borough of Winchester, which was in the nomination of the duke. Mr Flood, unwilling to occupy a dependent seat, purchased his election at the cost of four thousand pounds.

It was on the third of December, at the close of a long debate on Mr Fox's East India bill, that Mr Flood entered the English house of commons for the first time as a member. His intention was to vote with Mr Pitt against this measure: it was perhaps a wonted impulse that prompted him to rise, with a view to say a few words on the principle of the bill. His fame had travelled before him, and expectation had been strongly excited among the members, so that the instant effect of his standing up, was to recall to their places many who were about to retire—to cause silence, and the appearance of universal attention. According to the received account, Mr Flood at once caught the feeling of the house, and could not resist its effect: he recoiled from the idea of disappointing a popular sensation, which was flattering to his pride, and suffered himself to be carried on into details, for which it is generally assumed he had made no previous preparation. Of this we must, by the way, assert our doubt. For many days previous to the debate on the India question, he had received several letters and enclosures on the subject from the duke of Chandos,\* and it may be presumed from others, anxiously urging his journey that he might take a part in the discussion on the second reading of Mr Fox's bill; on the very night of the debate, he arrived, after a forced march which it is not easy to disjoin from some specific purpose. It is true that he cannot have had the full advantage of the voluminous documentary papers which lay on the table: but for any purpose of a display of oratory, or for a statement of general principles, such a laborious investigation was unnecessary. He, however, still laboured under many disadvantages. Among others, that of a long and fatiguing journey: and were we even to assume that he had fully meditated the subject with a view to take a part in its discussion, yet it must be understood by every one who has been in the habit of public speaking (or indeed private conversation,) that the effect of bodily fatigue, or any cause which depresses the physical powers, is to lower the springs of thought and still more of language. With these considerations, it can be felt that should we even admit, what some may suspect, much unacknowledged preparation, Mr Flood must have arisen at an enormous disadvantage. His language was nevertheless not destitute of its customary correctness—his exposition of his view of the subject, accurate and well digested—he had justly seized all the prominent points of the subject, and viewed them in the same light as Mr Pitt: a fact inconsistent with the assumption of an unprepared rising. But his language was cold, his manner tedious and embarrassed, and the arguments which he used already exhausted: the charm of eloquence was entirely wanting, and a coldly correct piece of trite argument was entirely inadequate to satisfy the demands of expectation, and far below the reputation of Mr Flood. There was, in truth, a disadvantage of a kind less purely incidental, which it would too much swell this memoir to notice here—as it cannot be mentioned without diffuse ex-

\* Correspondence, Lett. 73, 76, and 77.

planation. Some observations we cannot avoid: on comparing the report of Mr Flood's speech on this occasion, with those of his most important speeches in the Irish parliament, we cannot discover in the latter any very decided marks of superiority either in style or substance: and we are very much inclined to think that the disappointment attending his *debut* in the British House, is, in part at least, to be attributed to the effects of comparison and a fallacious estimate. Mr Flood's very high ratiocinative powers had a value in the Irish house, increased by the circumstance that they were there a distinction. In England, where men were accustomed to listen to Burke, Pitt, and Fox, orators who in their different styles had carried political eloquence to its highest perfection, and who combined the powers which Mr Flood possessed with others to which he had comparatively little pretension; such an auditory were likely at first to be disappointed at the best probable fulfilment of expectations, in which the ordinary exaggerations of rumour had no small part. It has been justly observed, that his declaring himself independent of both sides of the house, was likely to raise a prepossession against him in both parties. The report\* given of his speech in Hansard's debates, nevertheless displays much precaution and tact, and great care to communicate to the house a full impression of the difficulties under which he rose. For such statements there is, (it is well known,) no great allowance; they are a recognised part of the rhetorician's art; yet it must be allowed that however prepared, he was placed under some disadvantages. Upon the whole, the effort is considered by his admirers to have been incautious and premature, and was regarded as a failure by himself. In addition to these remarks, we shall extract a passage from Wraxall's Memoirs, which contains a brief, and we think fair account of the whole incident:—"Mr Henry Flood, one of the most celebrated orators in the Irish parliament, (who had just been brought in for Winchester,) rising for the first time, proposed to speak in the British house of commons. His appearance produced an instant calm, and he was heard with universal curiosity while he delivered his sentiments, which were strongly inimical to the East India bill. Though possessing little local or accurate information on the immediate subject of the debate, he spoke with great ability and good sense; but the slow, measured, and sententious style of enunciation which characterized his eloquence—however calculated to excite admiration it might be in the sister kingdom—appeared to English ears cold, stiff, and deficient in some of the best recommendations to attention. Unfortunately, too, for Flood, one of his own countrymen, Mr Courtney, instantly opened on him such a battery of ridicule and wit, seasoned with allusions or reflections of the most personal and painful kind, which seemed to overwhelm the new member." Respecting this incident, Mr Moore has recorded the following statement from Lord Byron:—"When I met old Courtney, the orator, at Roger's, the poet's, in 1811-12, I was much taken with the portly remains of his fine figure, and the still acute quickness of his conversation. It was *he* who silenced Flood in the English house, by a crushing reply to the hasty *debut* of the rival of Grattan in Ireland.

"I asked Courtney—for I like to trace motives—if he had not some personal provocation, for the acrimony of his answer seemed to involve it? Courtney said, *he had*. That when in Ireland, (being an Irishman,) at the bar of the Irish house of commons, Flood had made a personal and unfair attack on himself, who, not being a member of that house, could not defend himself; and that some years afterwards, the opportunity of retort offering in the English parliament, he could not resist it."\*

A dissolution of parliament speedily followed, and the consequence to Mr Flood was a vexatious controversy with the duke of Chandos, who refused to put him in nomination a second time. Of this refusal the grounds are indistinctly and partially stated in a tedious correspondence between the parties concerned and their friends, which occupy thirty quarto pages of Mr Flood's correspondence. To a first apprehension of the case, it would seem that the duke involved both himself and Mr Flood in inextricable embarrassments, by want of proper candour and firmness, in announcing his change of purpose, with the real motives, in their first conception. It would appear that he was offended by Mr Flood's declarations of perfect independence, but was reluctant to say so, and took shelter in subterfuges dependent on recollected conversations and implied understandings. Mr Flood retorted similar arguments; and both have, we think, preserved the appearance of speciousness, by stating the question upon the grounds severally most advantageous to the stater. The duke urges that he could not have intended to nominate Mr Flood to a "perpetuity" in his borough; that Mr Flood had stated his wishes to be confined to the present parliament; and that he had even engaged to vacate his seat, should any cause of dissatisfaction arise. But to such arguments it could be answered, that these were but considerations purely incidental, and never reduced into specific pledges; while there were certain very obvious and simple understandings, founded on the general sense entertained in all dealings between men of honour, on which Mr Flood had a right to count. The duke had made use of occasional expressions, such as to impress on Mr Flood that it was his design to support him in the next election; and such support appeared a condition so evidently involved in the entire of the transaction referred to its objects, that no cause of change could clearly exempt the duke from the obligation of giving a seasonable notice. But in addition to this consideration, it was asserted by Mr Flood, and admitted by the duke, that he had actually authorized Mr Flood to take certain steps relative to a second election.† The fairest view of the question is, after all, that contained in the following statement, taken from one of Mr Flood's letters to the duke:—"The duke expressed his intention, as well after Christmas as before, that Mr Flood should come in for Winchester this parliament . . . Mr Flood is free to say that intentions repeatedly declared in serious matters, and between serious men, embarking persons of a certain description in concerns of depth

\* We are indebted for these extracts on this point, to the industry of Mr Warden Flood, who has brought them together in his memoir of H. Flood.

† This statement will be found in the correspondence.



and moment, affecting their whole situation, held on to the last moment, and till opportunities are lost that cannot be retrieved;—he is free to say, that in his mind, and, as he conceives, in that of all mankind, such circumstances do constitute a serious ground of obligation to all the feelings of honour.” It would be refining, to an extent beyond the importance of the subject, to lay down the precise limits, and to point out the accurate application of so general a position. The truth seems to be, that the duke did not himself conceive the objection on which he afterwards acted, until it was suggested by his attorney, and by some of the electors. When this communication had occurred, it was late to repair the effect of any change of intention by a notice, for which the seasonable moment had passed—while it was considered by the duke too much to be expected that he should hazard his interest, or lower his political importance, by persisting in favour of Mr Flood. In his correspondence, he is necessarily compelled to touch this fact lightly, and with the utmost caution, reminding Mr Flood that there is a consideration which is too delicate for explicit discussion. It might, under the whole circumstances, be not unreasonably expected by the duke, that Mr Flood would see that he was placed in a position of some embarrassment, and, as is to be presumed in such cases, take this embarrassment into account.

The correspondence on this occasion was continued for some weeks; intermediate parties were called in, but seemed to shrink from the uncompromising violence of Mr Flood, who evidently aimed to bring the question to the decision of arms—the savage resort of the time. This result was averted by the quiet obstinacy of the duke, who held his ground in the dispute without even recognising the angry tone and the insinuated hostility of his adversary. We shall only add to these general statements, that on viewing the whole question, and the entire correspondence of both parties concerned, we are not quite satisfied that either appears in the most favourable light. On the duke’s part, there is much of that shuffling which arises from weakness of character; on that of Mr Flood, inordinate self-assertion, and a temper inconsiderate of others.

In 1784, Mr Flood received an invitation from some voters of the borough of Seaford; and Mr Peter Burrowes, then a student in the Temple, was employed to act as his representative on the occasion. After two defeats, arising from illegal conduct of adverse parties, which in each case caused the returns to be vacated, Mr Flood was elected.

Concerning the remainder of his career we must endeavour to be very brief. On several subsequent occasions he sustained his parliamentary reputation, by displays of high oratorical power, not unworthy of his best days in the Irish house of commons. He was thus become a member of the parliament in both kingdoms, and was not remiss in either.

He continued to engage actively, though unsuccessfully, in the question of parliamentary reform in his own country. In the year 1785, the commercial regulations were introduced by Mr Secretary Orde. Against these Mr Flood took a very leading and prominent part, to which we shall revert and endeavour to do justice, when engaged in the details of this portion of our history. On the pro-

posal for a commercial treaty with France, in 1787, his efforts in the British parliament deserve, and have received, much high and well-merited praise.

In 1790, he attempted to introduce a scheme of reform in the English house of commons; but the times were altered, and it was evident that the question at that moment stood on different and peculiar grounds. The infidel and disorganizing tendency of the principles then diffused, with the usual energy of fanaticism, throughout the kingdom, had awakened a salutary fear in the public mind. Mr Flood had lived too long in the contemplation of tempestuous and irregular political workings to be easily alarmed, or to be very keenly alive to the first vibrations of the wave of change, then in its beginning. His views had been framed in and for Ireland; and his habits of thinking mainly adjusted to the peculiar condition of this country. It was also pre-eminently a part of his temper to adhere to his own views. On a mind like his, broad and deep, but rooted like the oak to which he was compared, it is no reproach to say that the powerful, and seemingly unanswerable expositions of Mr Burke, which changed the current of that critical time and saved England, had no influence upon him. But in this he stands with Fox, and many other men of equal and superior powers; nor can he be fairly depreciated for the want of that higher and more comprehensive state-philosophy, which so many able men were bereft of, and which but one possessed. It is, indeed, one of the curious and interesting phenomena of history, to observe how little knowledge of the actual laws of human change—of the working of great social processes—and, in a word, of the moral forces in operation on human events, there is to be discovered in the government of councils, or in the opinions of the most eminent politicians. The power of arguing points—the comprehensive command and array of facts—the rapid perception of present realities and immediate consequences—and the ready penetration into the actuating motives of the opponent or the ally: these will be mostly observed in various degrees to enter into the combination of qualities which constitute the statesman. They are easily apprehended by the criticism of the vulgar, being but more powerful and efficient developments of the common sense of the multitude. Hence the general error of judgment as to what is called consistency;—the apprehension of the crowd will cleave to names and conventions when (looking to the actual constitution of things) their sense has virtually changed. And hence, also, in a still higher degree, the risk he runs of being misunderstood, who looks at human events through the medium of principles, and consequently perceives and points out results which a more remote period yet hides from the narrowness of ordinary vision.

Looking exclusively to the rudiments of constitutional theory, as expounded by lawyers, casuists, and historical writers, it is easy to maintain the question in favour of parliamentary reform—a desideratum of all times, while the world endures—and the man whose learning goes no further than these conditions, must always, and under all circumstances, preserve one rigid line; he will maintain the cause of reform in the midst of universal confusion; he will purify by fire when the conflagration is breaking out. But it was no time to talk

about reform in England,\* when the foul progeny of revolution was swarming into every hamlet through the land. We must not, however, be tempted to digress upon a topic which will call for our more extensive consideration hereafter, when we must repeat and expand the foregoing reflections. Mr Flood was an eloquent orator of the first rank, and no inferior casuist; he was firm, independent, and took an honest and fair course; he was perfectly consistent, according to his principles of acting and judging, and we must confess that we should not have here branched into these comments, had we not been provoked by the reflections thrown out among some of his biographers, who have, with the very common fault of this class of writers, thought it necessary to elevate him by the disparagement of another, who acted differently in the same juncture of events. Mr Flood's speech on the subject of reform, so far as we have been enabled to form any judgment, is indeed remarkable for its soundness and constitutional knowledge, and amply supports the character which he possessed.

It may be considered as the close of his career. In the following parliament he was excluded, as his biographer states, by the efforts of both parties. He retired to Farmley, where he is represented as suffering from the painful sense of undeserved slight. The sentiment is such as few eminent political men would, under similar circumstances, be likely to escape; and Mr Flood's proud, ambitious, and resentful tone of mind, must have been more than ordinarily liable to such affections. He was suffering from an attack of gout, when he ventured to expose his person imprudently on the occasion of a fire breaking out in his premises. A cold, terminating in pleurisy, followed, and caused his death, on the 2d of December, 1791.

Mr Flood, on the lowest impartial estimate, must be reckoned among the first public men of his day. As an orator, inferior to few; as a political casuist, superior to most. His style, firm, well arranged, simple, and perspicuous; his method of reasoning always ingenious and full of art; frequently just, forcible, and satisfactory. He was master of the general elements of constitutional polity, and on many great questions used his knowledge with a power which cannot easily be overrated. In the earlier part of his public life, though living among eminent men, he was without a rival. In later years, when he was placed side by side with a few who were of more ascendant powers and who claimed an equal place, he was, we cannot help feeling, in a considerable degree affected by a temper not framed to be patient of comparison. Generous, honourable, kindly affectioned, and a sincere lover of Ireland, his character was deeply tinctured with pride and self-importance; and as life advanced, in the strife with party and individual, a large portion of acrimony appears to have been gradually mingled in the mass.

Concerning those parts of his public conduct which have been questioned, we have expressed our opinion in the course of this memoir, with that degree of reserve which ought, we think, to be observed in every attempt to penetrate the motives of an individual. Without

\* Mr Flood's answer to this very objection is an evasion; but it is worthy of his master Demosthenes, as a specimen of clear, pointed, and condensed oratory.



assenting to the imputations of his opponents, we would deduct considerably from the too indiscriminate defences of his friends; and were we to enter on a precise analysis, we should incline to refer to the mixed motives so generally to be discovered at the root of human conduct. There are few so ignorant as not to have some perception of the manner in which a lurking self-interest will be spun round and adorned by the dexterity of reason, with a comely cloud of lofty and conscientious motives. This is but a reading of the prophet's adage, "The heart is deceitful above all things," &c. Any one who treads the common ways of life, and watches, as they deserve, the shiftings of human opinion, will not want examples.

Mr Flood's bequest to Ireland has been commemorated and commented upon in a little book which is itself an honourable monument. The following is the actual clause of his will:—"To the University of Ireland, commonly called Trinity College, Dublin, by whatsoever style, and under whatsoever title it is most properly and legally characterized and distinguished, to hold in fee and for ever for the purposes hereinafter mentioned; that is to say, I will and direct that, on their coming into possession of this my bequest, on the death of my said wife, they do institute and maintain, as a perpetual establishment, a professorship of, and for the native Irish, or Erse language, and that they do appoint, if he be still living, colonel Charles Vallancey to be the first professor thereof, with a salary of no less than £300 sterling a-year, that by his eminent and successful labours in the study and recovery of that language, he well deserves to be first appointed. And I will and appoint, that they do grant one annual and liberal premium for the best, and another for the next best composition in prose or verse, in the native Irish, or Erse language, upon some point of ancient history, government, religion, literature, or situation of Ireland; and also one other annual and liberal premium, one for the best, and another for the next best composition in English prose or verse, in commemoration of some of those great characters, either of ancient or modern nations, who have been eminently serviceable and honourable to their country—seeing that nothing stimulates to great deeds more strongly than great examples; and I will that the rents and profits of my said lands, houses, hereditaments, and estates, shall be further applied by the said university to the purchase of all printed books and manuscripts in the said native Irish or Erse language, wheresoever to be obtained; and next, to the purchase of all printed books and manuscripts of the dialects and languages that are akin to the said native Irish, or Erse language; and then to the purchase of all valuable books, and editions of books, in the learned and in the modern polished languages."

### Walter Hussey Burgh.

BORN A.D. 1743.—DIED A.D. 1783.

OF Walter Hussey, who took in addition the name of Burgh, our records are scanty indeed, being confined to the scattered notices which

are to be met with in reports and among the memoirs of some of his contemporaries, who had the better fortune to be commemorated before time had obliterated the recollections of their personal history. Yet among the most illustrious characters of a period abounding in eminent men, there can hardly be named one more truly entitled to the meed of history. Unhappily, these remarks will also in some measure apply to several distinguished persons of the same eventful time. Nor are the memories of Charlemont, Flood, and Grattan, much more indebted to the pre-eminent situations they filled in the political scene, than to the fortunate circumstance of their having attached friends or relatives, who did not suffer them to pass without their record. The names of Burgh, Daly, Perry, &c., &c., which filled no secondary place in the annals of the most remarkable crisis of Irish history, must, we regret to say it, occupy a comparatively slight space in our pages. This is, it is true, the less to be lamented, as the events and incidents which should constitute the main portion of such records, are, for the most part, identical with the materials which compose our more circumstantial memoirs; and we may, perhaps, after all, best perform our duty to the public, by collecting those few scattered lights which occur in the pages of the historians and political writers of the period. As we cannot even pretend to exercise our judgment very freely upon such narrow grounds, we have also to premise that we must adhere more closely than we have generally seen reason to do to the statements, and even the language of our authorities.

The first notice which we have been enabled to find of Burgh, places him in the Irish commons as the member for a borough of the duke of Leinster, in 1768. He then took a conspicuous part in opposition to lord Townshend's government. We incidentally learn, that, in the university, he had been highly distinguished for classical learning, and for his poetic taste and talent. On his first appearance in the house he obtained notice for a style, which, from Mr Hardy's designation, we should presume to have been rather too highly embellished with the flowers of poetry, and with a more profuse display of classical quotation than would be approved by his maturer experience. But we are also told that every session refined away something of these superfluities, and improved him into the most elegant and interesting debater of his day.

He was at the same time a barrister of considerable business and high character; and, in the early part of lord Buckingham's administration, obtained the rank of prime serjeant. Finding it difficult to reconcile his politics with those of the government, after one year's trial, he threw up his office, and his return to the popular party was a subject of general congratulation.

On the introduction of the question of Irish trade in 1779, by Mr Grattan's amendment to the address in answer to the lord-lieutenant's speech, Mr Burgh concluded a spirited debate, by moving, instead of the amendment, "That it is not by temporary expedients, but by a free trade alone, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin." This amendment had been previously concerted between Messrs Burgh, Daly, and Grattan. The amendment to the address, as first proposed by Mr Grattan, had been previously drawn up by

Daly, but several objections having arisen, were concluded by Mr Burgh's amendment. At this time Mr Burgh was member for the University, of which body he represented the opinions in favour of Irish trade. The merit of his conduct was enhanced by the fact that he then held office. Shortly after, in the same year, and while the Irish parliament was yet held in irritating suspense on the subject of trade, a motion was made in the committee of supply to limit the grant to six months. On this occasion Mr Burgh made a speech, which has been often commemorated by Irish historians, both for its effects and intrinsic merits. This was the occasion on which he felt it necessary to resign his office. Soon after, when Mr Grattan was about to bring forward his motion on the question of the independence of the Irish parliament, he wrote to request the support of Burgh, and was answered, "I shall attend, and if it were my last vote I shall give it in favour of my country." When he had made his speech in this debate, he turned to Mr Grattan, and said, "I have now sacrificed the greatest honour an Irishman can aim at."

He was, nevertheless, soon after raised to the bench as chief baron of the exchequer, in which high station he died in 1783, in the fortieth year of his age. On the subject of his character some fine things have been said by Mr Flood, Mr Grattan, and others, most of which are become familiar by frequent repetition. Mr Flood, in speaking of his death, observed, "he did not live to be ennobled by patent—he was ennobled by nature." Lord Temple's letter on the occasion, contains a testimony the more valuable, because it is not liable to the species of deduction mostly to be made from rhetorical eulogy. "No one had that steady decided weight which he possessed in the judgment and affections of his country; and no one had more decidedly that inflexible and constitutional integrity which the times and circumstances peculiarly call for."

Burgh left his family in embarrassed circumstances. His infirmity was the love of ostentatious display: his equipage was stately and expensive beyond his rank and means; six horses and three outriders would, in our times, expose a chief baron to the world's smile. Mr Grattan proposed, and obtained from parliament, a grant for the relief of his family.

## John Hely Hutchinson.

BORN A.D. ———.—DIED A.D. 1795.

JOHN HELY HUTCHINSON was the son of Mr Francis Hely, the name of Hutchinson was afterwards assumed in consequence of his marriage with a Miss Nixon, through whom he obtained possession of the estate of Richard Hutchinson, of Knocklofty, in the county of Tipperary.

He was called to the bar in 1748, and made a rapid progress to professional eminence. His legal and political knowledge, and distinguished powers as an orator, soon opened the way to advancement, and the house of commons was the sure avenue to promotion. He began as a sturdy ally in the ranks of opposition, and soon made himself



of sufficient importance to attract the offers of government, in consequence of which he soon obtained his silk gown, and, in 1762, was appointed prime serjeant.

In this station he continued until 1774. He then resigned and gave up his professional pursuits for the high appointment of provost, to which dignity he was promoted on the death of provost Andrews.

Such an appointment being of a nature not merely anomalous, but—looking to the character and objects, to the constitution and dignity of the university of Dublin—bearing the characters of a most unwarranted stretch of power, must necessarily arrest the reader's attention. It seems assuredly to demonstrate the urgent necessities of the administration of that day for political support against the growing power of opposition. It also illustrates strongly the contempt for Ireland, so often indicated in the proceedings of the Castle. To the fellows, professors and scholars of Trinity college, in that very time eminent for even more than their usual reputation of learning and talent, such an outrage could hardly have been offered by an administration competent either to appreciate these qualifications, or to understand the more true and permanent interests of the country. Ireland, then beginning to cry aloud for the privileges of national manhood, but yet whole generations away from moral and intellectual puberty, was to be over-ruled by expedients. Instead of fostering institutions, and endeavouring to spread and cultivate the seeds of future civilization and prosperity, all was sacrificed first to still the sounds of gathering discontent, and then to conciliate by premature, yet insufficient, concessions. There was none of the mild and kindly wisdom which looks to the real wants and actual interests, and anticipates the growth of a nation. The viceroy, if he aimed to be popular, acted with indiscriminating indulgence—if not, he only considered how best the domination of England was to be preserved whole. To repress the impatient and unenlightened, though in the main generous clamours of demagogues, and to restrain the over-zealous and equally uninstructed adherents—who but too well justified the discontents and complaints which they vainly endeavoured to silence by intimidation—formed no part of the policy of the English government. It never entered into their contemplation—that Ireland, though far behind England, in the civilization of her people, yet comprised in her higher ranks a large and increasing nucleus of the very highest civilization, essentially English in its entire frame: and that consequently, whether matured or not, she would never rest content, one single step short of England, in advantages or pretensions. The dispute could not fail to arise, and could not proceed without propagating an impulse through every rank. This fundamental and axiomatic truth, would have demanded from a comprehensive and enlightened government, an early attention to the diffusion of the comforts, arts and knowledge of civilized life. To conduct, in peace, the administration of a country of which the whole civil system was disorderly, and to maintain the pressure of a destructive and intolerable fiscal pressure, was the main end of British policy. From such a policy, the venerable seat of science and polite letters, might well have congratulated itself upon a considerable interval of immunity from the time when it was converted into a barrack by the vile Tyrconnel and the cowardly

tyrant James—to the rude and inconsiderate imposition of an extern provost.

Yet if such an insult and wrong could be excused, it may find its apology in the distinguished reputation of the person thus advanced. As an orator, he was the rival of Flood, and in their frequent conflicts, was generally considered to have the advantage: he was specially distinguished for a peculiar command of style, which enabled him to be concise or diffusive, perplexing or perspicuous, simple and plain-spoken, or splendid and figurative as the occasion required: as a debater he has been thus described by secretary Hamilton: “he was the speaker, who, in support of the government, had always something to say which gratified the house—that he could go out in all weathers, and as a debater was therefore inestimable.” He always contrived to interest and retain the attention of the house, and in every collision he preserved his temper and conciliated his hearers by the appearance of respect. He was a fine scholar, and a lover of classical learning.

Among the recorded peculiarities of his character, was his inordinate and indiscriminate appetite for promotions. Among other instances, a story is told of his having made an application to lord Townshend, for some addition to the numerous appointments which he had contrived to sweep together in his own person. Townshend jestingly answered, that there was at the moment nothing vacant but a majority of horse. But to his surprise, Mr Hutchinson immediately pressed for it. It may now be considered as matter of more legitimate wonder, that it was granted, and that being himself unable to serve in that capacity, his valour was obliged to be represented by a deputy major. The incident was indeed by no means new—nor are we quite sure that the following *mot* of lord North’s was altogether original; it is still highly appropriate. When Mr Hutchinson appeared in the court of St James, the king asked who he was: lord North answered, “that is your majesty’s principal secretary of state, in the Irish establishment; a man, on whom if your majesty were pleased to bestow England and Ireland, he would ask for the Isle of Man for a potato garden.”

The spirit of exaction without pretensions, and of lax and unprincipled concession thus ascertained, may sufficiently explain the intrusive appointment of a provost. The result was vexatious to Hutchinson, as it was derogatory to the university. Such an appointment could not be willingly submitted to by the senior fellows, or by any member of the university; and indications of this reluctance did not fail to appear. Hutchinson’s dexterity supported by the power of administration, served him in good stead: he quickly contrived to create a division in his favour. Unable to propitiate in any way the injured dignity of the fellows, he successfully appealed to the folly and vanity of the students. The prospect of converting a seat of learning, a school of science, ancient literature and theology, into a seminary for the light-heeled and light-fingered frivolities of fashionable society; a dancing school, a riding school, and a gymnasium, where young gentlemen might be accomplished for the ball room and the race course; where the sons of the nobility might acquire those rudiments which had been neglected in the stables at home, and where their

daughters might in the course of time hope to come for similar refinements. Such an improvement could not fail to win the acclamations of freshmen—delighted to exchange the categories and predicaments for the five positions, and the moods and figures of Aristotle for the lighter figures of the reel and strathspey. The youthful fry were quickly arrayed for the gay functionary who came thus attended with song and dance, to banish the conventual gloom of dark-stoled philosophy; and substitute

Jest, and youthful jollity,  
Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,  
Nods and becks, and wreathed smiles,

the resort and inspiration of Euphrosyne, for the antiquated empire of the graver muse. Such was the keen and subtle device of the lawyer and the political partisan: he had read his Sallust to some purpose, and knew the efficacy of promise on light and undisciplined minds. "*Sed maxume adolescentium familiaritates adpetebat: eorum animi molles et ætate fluxi dolis haud difficulter capiebantur. Nam uti cujusque studium ex ætate flagrabat, aliis scorta præbere; aliis canes atque equos mercari; postremo neque sumtui, neque modestiæ suæ parcere, dum illos obnoxios fidosque faceret.*"

The bait was also swallowed with avidity by the public, ever prone to rush headlong into every new and specious project—purblind to all distinctions—and happy to be excited by plausibilities and promises of fancied improvement. The journalists and the little pamphleteers—then a most ignorant class, more subject to the influence of public prejudices, than capable of correcting or dispelling them; and inflated with a low contempt for all knowledge beyond the journey-work babble of the weekly press—fell into this popular and prosperous device, and helped with their wonted dexterity to give popularity to the new provost and his enlightened scheme to improve upon the *humaniores literæ*.

On the other side, it may well be supposed that there were many who were keenly alive to a proper sense of the strange and grotesque indignity thus offered, not only to the college, but to Ireland: and indeed to all learning and learned men, of every nation and time. It was seen that the proposed innovations were unsuitable: that fashionable accomplishments could be acquired at home, at grammar schools, and from the numerous professors who were ever at hand in town and country. It was understood by persons a little removed from the crowd in common sense, that a young logician could receive the visits of a dancing-master, or attend a riding-master, without the necessity of investing these dignified professors with the cap and gown, and dubbing them doctors of dancing or prancing.

But, above all, the senior fellows, as best became their character and station, exerted themselves to ward off a blow which would have gone far to obscure the light of the Irish seat of learning. And happily they resisted with effect; though it is, indeed, to be presumed that Hutchinson could never seriously have intended to carry into effect his fantastic proposal. Among the incidents of this controversy, some very curious have been recorded. Dr Patrick Duignan, a man of a coarse taste, but exceedingly vigorous understanding, a



lawyer also, and a senior fellow, took an active part. He published several satirical squibs in the *Hibernian Journal*; and, not content with writing, he also assailed the new provost with rough and homely language, which was probably more true than courteous. On these assaults of the tongue, the provost, it is said, looked down with that contempt which is equally available on any side of any cause, and the best weapon when the case affords no better. Some of his partisans and friends were, however, less moderate, and the Doctor was not suffered to escape affronts and indignities, which he met and parried with a degree of humour and dexterity, which must afford material for a more detailed account than we could conveniently add to this memoir, and shall therefore reserve for our notice of the Doctor himself.

We shall only here add on the subject that Hutchinson retained the provostship during his life. The disgraceful project of the gymnasium was of course relinquished, and it is to be presumed that the real talents and learning of a very able man gradually recommended him to the members of the board.

He also continued to sit in the house of commons as member for the city of Cork. As a member of the legislature, it may be mentioned to his praise, that he took a prominent part in favour of the octennial bill, the address in favour of free trade, and the bill for the repeal of the penal laws affecting the members of the Church of Rome.

His death occurred in 1795. He was offered a peerage, and accepted the honour for his family in the person of his wife, who was created baroness Donoughmore. Hence the origin of this title in the peerage.

## Barry Yelberton, Viscount Avonmore.

BORN A.D. 1736.—DIED A.D. 1805.

BARRY YELVERTON was born at Newmarket, in the county of Cork. He was sent early to the village-school of that town,—a school of that order so well known in Ireland, and perhaps nowhere else: the reader will find, or may recollect, its description in Mr Carleton's "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry." At these schools an extensive and accurate acquaintance with Greek and Latin authors, and a still more thorough intimacy with the mathematical sciences, as then known in these kingdoms, were commonly to be met with in the rudest hovel, and under the most uncouth guise of dress, manner, and diction. At such schools, and from such instructors, it might be expected now and then to happen, that native genius might find its upward impulse, and rise into the notice and advantages of a higher level. Such was the fortune of two eminent Irishmen, who nearly at the same period\* received their first education in the village-school of Newmarket. Yelberton, some years older than Curran, preceded him also in the school; and some of the biographers of the former have noticed the curiously paralleled circumstances of their early history.

\* There is a difference of twelve years.

Among other curious anecdotes respecting the early years of Yelverton, it is told that he had obtained the situation of usher in a school kept by a Mr Buck in North King-street, Dublin. Mrs Buck was an enlightened economist, and conceived the profound improvement of a very considerable saving in her domestic expenditure, by reducing the diet of the ushers to bread and milk—the wholesome and substantial fare of schoolboys in all generations. The lady's theory was accordingly put in actual operation; and Yelverton, who was head usher, feeling his pride nettled by a change no less ungrateful to his stomach than derogatory to his station, came to the bold resolution of seeking his fortune in a higher and more worthy field. Without delay he quitted the King-street academy, and by strenuous exertions, of which we deeply regret that we have no particular account to offer, he was called to the bar in 1764.

At the bar he was unquestionably placed in his proper element; but, as commonly happens, he continued for some years to walk the courts without making any progress in his profession. He, nevertheless, attracted that general notice which talents can seldom fail to meet in a circle so observant and informed as the Irish bar. Great colloquial talents are, of all others, the most unlikely to lie concealed, and these Yelverton eminently possessed. It was a time when party feeling was just beginning to rise in Ireland, and when the great importance of such powers as he was known to possess began to be strongly felt; and, in 1774, he was elected to represent the city of Carrickfergus in the Irish house of commons. His general character as an orator and politician are drawn with distinctness and force, and perhaps as much accuracy as may reasonably be looked for in such portraitures, by Barrington. He is described as, in their several descriptions of eloquence, inferior respectively to Flood, Grattan, Burgh, and Curran, but, in the command of “powerful, nervous language, superior to them all. A vigorous, commanding, undaunted eloquence burst in torrents from his lips,” &c. Mr Barrington goes on to describe the moral features of his disposition; and, among other traits, mentions that “in the common transactions of the world he was an infant.” From the entire of this portion of Mr Barrington's description, it is to be inferred that he was a man of extreme simplicity and singleness of character, with the virtues and failings not unusually attendant on such a character, and of warm passions and sensibilities, which heightened and gave an active effect to such qualities. With a spirit which moved free from the numberless fine checks and disguises by which the selfishness and inhumanity of the crowd are commonly repressed and masked, he was equally insensible to the multiform refined conventions which are dependent on the same principle, which grow up as instincts in the vulgar mind, and regulate, more or less, the intercourse and conversation of the world. Such a man will often be observed to err on both sides of the common track, now falling into strange and grotesque deviations, and now towering in the dignity of native goodness; and, being more regulated by feeling than by principle, will also be seen to diverge where reason and rule must be looked to exclusively, or nobly leading the way when impulse and good feeling are called into operation, and constitute the elements of

action. This is, however, a generalization; to what precise extent it may be truly applied to Yelverton we cannot pretend to say: Barrington tells us that he was, "in the varieties of right and wrong, of propriety and error, a frail mortal;" and on this we but offer a construction derived from observation and experience. We are further informed in the same sentence that he was, "in the senate and at the bar a mighty giant; it was on the bench that, unconscious of his errors, and in his home that, unconscious of virtues, both were most conspicuous." Much of Mr Barrington's sketching we can but imperfectly comprehend. There was in his day a laboured and ambitious flow of broken and antithetical sentences, which tempted writers into the language of fine distinctions beyond the line of precise meaning. We can, nevertheless, infer from a very uncommon confusion of words, that Yelverton was profusely generous without the reserve of prudence, and the character may be completed by the following touches which fall in well with the foregoing description:—"His character was entirely transparent, it had no opaque qualities—his passions were open—his prepossessions palpable—his failings obvious—and he took as little pains to conceal his faults as to publish his perfections." To this, as we can, indeed, do nothing more, we may add the following account of his legal and judicial character from the same authority:—"Amplly qualified for the bench by profound legal and constitutional learning—extensive professional practice—strong logical powers—a classical and wide ranging capacity—equitable propensities, and a philanthropic disposition—he possessed all the positive qualifications for a great judge." In counterbalance to these characteristics, we are told that he "received impressions too soon, and perhaps too strongly; he was indolent in research, and impatient in discussion," &c. Every one will recollect the well-known relation of an amusing instance, in which Mr Curran practised with considerable effect on this temper of mind.

We have already given some account of the monks of St Patrick, otherwise called "Monks of the Screw"—a political and convivial society, from which may be traced the first dawnings of that spirit which afterwards gave so much energy and talent to the political struggles of Ireland in the last century. This body was formed by the subject of this memoir, in 1779—it comprised all that was distinguished for wit and talent at the time. The place of their meeting was in Kevin street; and, consisting chiefly of barristers and members of parliament, they were accustomed to meet in term time on Saturdays. In these meetings they seem to have kept up, in some measure, a travestied imitation of certain conventual formalities—the chapter at which the abbot presided, and at which the members wore black robes, was held before commons: a grave deportment gave poignancy to the sallies of occasional but still not intemperate humour, for which it offered materials and a decorous mask. From the members are said to have emanated most of the literary political productions which obtained decided effect in the great popular struggle which followed. Among the most eminent members, besides the founder, were Curran, Day (senior fellow), Arthur Browne (the fellow), Burgh, earl of Charlemont, Corry, Daly, Day (the judge), Doyle (afterwards major-general and a baro-



net), Grattan, earl of Mornington, G. Ogle, Ponsonby, Sir Michael Smith, Stack (fellow), marquis of Townshend, Arthur Wolfe (lord Kilwarden). These we select, not as the highest in rank, but as best known to the reader, from upwards of fifty-eight, all men of high repute in their generation. The society lasted until 1795. We shall hereafter give other curious details. But it is here that we may most fitly mention an incident connected with the recollections of the institution, which may be in some degree considered illustrative, both of the character of the meeting, and of the distinguished subject of this notice. In a trial, on which lord Avonmore sat as judge, Mr Curran was one of the counsel for the defendant: there had for some time previous existed a coldness between these eminent men. On this trial Mr Curran took occasion to appeal to the sensibility of his old friend, in the following allusion to the meetings of the club:—"This soothing hope I draw from the dearest and tenderest recollections of my life—from the remembrance of those attic heights and those refectories of the gods, which we have spent with those admired, and respected, and beloved companions who have gone before us; over whose ashes the most precious tears of Ireland have been shed. [Here lord Avonmore could not refrain from bursting into tears.] Yes, my good lord, I see you do not forget them. I see their sacred forms passing in sad review before your memory. I see your pained and softened fancy recalling those happy meetings, where the innocent enjoyment of social mirth became expanded into the nobler warmth of social virtue, and the horizon of the board became enlarged into the horizon of man—where the swelling heart conceived and communicated the pure and generous purpose—where my slenderer and younger taper imbibed its borrowed light from the more matured and redundant fountain of yours. Yes, my lord, we can remember those nights without any other regret than that they can never more return; for

"We spent them not in toys, or lust, or wine,  
But search of deep philosophy,  
Wit, eloquence, and poesy;  
Arts which I loved; for they, my friend, were thine."

The sequel to this incident is truly and affectingly characteristic—it had the effect of reconciling these two distinguished men. "At the moment the court rose, his lordship sent for his friend, and threw himself into his arms, declaring that unworthy artifices had been used to separate them, and that they should never succeed in future."\*

While yet a member of the house of commons he took an active and effectual part in the struggle for the trade and legislative independence of his country. But he had also the rare wisdom to see where to stop, and to mark the point where a popular revolution has gone to the utmost length to which its results can be salutary, and at which a violent reaction or the dissolution of society must be the next steps: a wisdom more wanting in Ireland than elsewhere, not so much, indeed, from any defect in the moral constitution of our people—though to this, too, some effect is due—as to the peculiar position of Ireland; which we have already, more than once, endeavoured to explain. At

\* Life of J. P. Curran, by his son, W. H. Curran.

the period when the volunteers, having fulfilled the very peculiar functions of an irregular remedy, in an irregular state of things—an empirical nostrum for a singular disease—ceased to have any efficiency but one, which, pushed a little further, would have plunged the country in deeper darkness and more galling chains, Mr Yelverton was among those whom the absurd and most childish cant of party consistency did not prevent from resisting the arrogation of an unconstitutional faction. He saw the fetters weaving for the emancipated legislature of Ireland; he was not deaf to the revolutionary maxims that were then beginning to breathe from rank to rank, and could not well avoid the inference of what was to follow, and what did follow.

In the administration of the duke of Portland he took a frank and manly part in opposition to many dear friends with whom he had been accustomed to feel and act, and opposed the violent proceedings of the convention of delegates. He took the lead in that stand which was made by the commons against the motion of Mr Flood, on November 29, 1783, to bring in a bill of parliamentary reform, on the ground that the motion was the dictate of an armed body. We have already related the circumstances; and the extracts with which we exemplified the opposition to that rash motion were taken from Mr Yelverton's speech. He was at this time attorney-general; and it is stated by a biographical writer that his promotion had been owing to the part he took against the convention of delegates; but, referring to dates, this must be erroneous. The promotion took place in 1782, according to this writer; but the convention in question occurred in 1783, and the above-mentioned incident was the first occasion on which any noticeable opposition to that body can be detected in Mr Yelverton. His promotion was due to his place and reputation at the bar. Of course the opinions, and, in some measure, the conduct of a sound constitutional lawyer was to be calculated on; but it could be shown that there was at the moment a disposition on the part of government to dispense its favours among the leaders of the popular party.

This point being settled, it is to be admitted that the able and spirited resistance of the attorney-general on that occasion was seasonable, and must, from whatever motive, whether of political wisdom or official duty, have been viewed by the administration as a meritorious service.

The high and influential station of attorney-general, when filled by such a man, is necessarily the step to higher honour. In 1784, he was nominated a privy-counsellor, and raised to the bench as chief baron.

The rest of his career must here be briefly told. He took the side of opposition on the regency question. In 1795 he was raised to the peerage by the title of baron Yelverton of Avonmore. He also supported the union. We offer these brief statements; as the events to which they refer have not yet come in the order of our historical narration.

In December, 1800, he was further raised to the rank of viscount in the Irish peerage.

He lived till 1805,—in the autumn of which year he died.

## Sir Boyle Roche, Baronet.

BORN A.D. ———.—DIED A.D. 1807.

THE claims of Sir Boyle Roche upon our notice are not, it must be confessed, of a very strong kind. Yet, it so happens that few men of his day are much more frequently named, or more the object of curiosity. The station which he filled in political society was singular, and is not without some interest for the stray gleam it reflects of the social character of his time.

He is said to have been descended from a junior branch of the Fermoy family. In early life he served in the army, and was distinguished in the American war. After retiring from the service he obtained a seat in the Irish house of commons, and enlisted from the commencement in the ranks of the Treasury bench. He obtained a small pension, and the appointment of master of the ceremonies in Dublin Castle. For this he was pre-eminently qualified by his handsome figure, graceful address, and ready wit. These qualities were in Sir Boyle also set off by a frank, open, and manly disposition, not always among the ornaments of that gaudy and perfumed station: the stilts of formality and the stays of fashion were needless appendages to the wardrobe of the true Irish gentleman of the old school, and, in the character of Sir Boyle, the English functionaries who came over prejudiced against the manners of our Irish capital, and, at the same time curious about the social powers and failings, the wit and blunder of our isle, found themselves agreeably enlightened on these points, by the fortunate combination of polished manners with the most native humour and spirit which met them on their first introduction to the castle.

These qualifications of Sir Boyle were, however, destined to find a wider field of display, and a more important if not more dignified office. The taste for fun and humour was universal, as it must, indeed, continue so long as the faculty of laughter endures; and, whether the notion was first suggested by the effect of some parliamentary blunder of more than usual felicity, or was the pure suggestion of administrative wisdom, it appears certain that Sir Boyle became, in course of time, a regular and most important ally of the several administrations of his time in the house, and obtained a celebrity in that position, which has made his name familiar as any other name, however illustrious.

Whenever it was thought necessary to soften down the heat generated in the debate by the overflow of Irish patriotism; to meet arguments which could not be replied to, by the unanswerable test of ridicule; or to scatter the force of plain statement by the brawn shield of burlesque, it was on such occasions that the rich and mellow brogue of Sir Boyle was heard above the uproar of debate. A happy knack of twisting facts or ideas, which, in ordinary tongues would be but common-place, into some unexpected form of comicality, enabled him to give that turn to excited passion and feeling which deprives the orator of the better part of his power, and compels the



accumulated indignation or obstinacy of a popular assembly to evaporate in a harmless laugh. Endowed with this rare and powerful qualification, it is easy to see how effectually he might be sometimes called up to charm away the effect of a kindling address from Grattan, or to retort the delicate and classic wit of Curran, by a whole drove of the most rampant comicalities of Munster.

It was a frequent subject of observation that the odd style of Sir Boyle was, from time to time, set off by marks of graver and more elaborate consideration than could easily be reconciled by the general opinion entertained of his habits and character of mind. But it was not as generally known that it was usual for the members of the Irish cabinet to write speeches for him, which he committed to memory; and, while mastering the substance, generally contrived to travesty into language, and ornament with peculiar graces of his own. On many of these occasions he was primed and loaded for action by the industry of Mr Edward Cooke, who acted during several administrations as muster-master to the wisdom of the Castle. But, still, his best and most distinguishing efforts were made on those happy occasions when he was carried forward by the felicity of his own genius.

Many curious anecdotes remain to illustrate the manner and the power of his parliamentary tactics. We shall confine ourselves to one or two.

Mr Serjeant Stanley, a member who had taken very unusual pains to concoct a speech of considerable force and effect, and, to make sure of success, had committed his well-conned oration to paper, happened to sit near Sir Boyle in the coffee-room of the house, studying his speech. Suddenly the person who had been speaking ended, and Mr Stanley rushed out to seize the moment of delivery; in his hurry he missed his pocket, and let the composition drop upon the floor. Sir Boyle picked it up, and, reading it over, was fully master of the contents. He returned to the house, where Mr Stanley continued watching for his opportunity. The address of Sir Boyle anticipated him, and, when both rose, the general cry of the house decided for the wit and humorist. Sir Boyle at once gravely delivered the whole oration, word for word, to the astonishment and dismay of the enraged author, who rose and walked into the coffee-room. When Sir Boyle made an end he followed, and thus addressed the subject of his exploit:—"My dear Stanley, here is your speech again, and I thank you kindly for the loan of it. I never was so much at a loss for a speech in the whole course of my life; and, sure, it is not a pin the worse for the wear, and now you may go in and speak it again yourself as soon as you please."

On another occasion the table was loaded with an enormous pile of papers, which had been accumulated by the successive demands of one of the opposition members, with a view to illustrate some motion. When this motion was about to be proposed, it was moved, as a necessary preliminary, that the documentary mass on the table should first be read to the house by the clerk. The whole house appeared in alarm for the proposed trial of its patience, as the reading could not be completed in less than two hours. A loud murmur arose through the benches on every side, on which Sir Boyle gravely rose and moved that

a dozen or two of the committee clerks should be called in, and have the documents distributed among them, when, by reading all together, the whole might be done in a quarter of an hour. A loud laugh dissolved the cloud of impatience, and the question was postponed to enable the mover to make some more convenient arrangement.

Sir Boyle was created a baronet in 1782.

He died in Dublin in June, 1807. He was a person of much amiability, endowed with many attractive social qualities, and was regretted in a large and respectable circle.

## Edmund Burke.

BORN A.D. 1730.—DIED A.D. 1797.

THE early history of the family of Burke is generally known; it has been already traced in these volumes. The Norman race of De Burgho, though it early lost the importance derived from extensive territorial acquisitions and princely rank, has yet, like the Geraldines and Butlers, survived the ruin of the feudal system, and still continues to be represented high among the Irish peerage. But the distinctions of high rank, and the honours of illustrious ancestry, lose much of their factitious lustre compared with the proud distinction of the noblest name that has ever graced the records of Irish worth and genius. The immediate family of Edmund Burke had been early settled in the county of Galway, and afterwards in the county of Limerick. In the latter county, his direct ancestors were deprived of large possessions, in the troubles of 1641.

A small estate, of about £300 per annum, near Castletown Roche, in the vicinity of Mallow and Doneraile, descended to Garret, the elder brother of Edmund Burke. Their father was an attorney; he lived on Arran Quay, in Dublin. He married a Miss Nagle, of Mallow, and had by her fourteen children, none of whom survived their infancy but Garret, Edmund, Richard, and Juliana. Of these, occasional notices may occur in the course of this memoir.

Edmund Burke was born at his father's house, in Dublin, January, 1730. His childhood was sickly, and the consumptive habit, which had probably carried off so many of his brothers and sisters, in his case menaced the same result. During the period of his youth, he was subject to a pain in the side, which disabled him from the ordinary amusements of youth, so that he mostly spent in study those intervals in which his brothers were at play. As his delicate health was thought to require a removal to the country, he was sent to his grandfather's house, in the county of Cork. During this sojourn, he attended as a day-scholar at a neighbouring school, kept by a person of the name of O'Halloran, where he received his first initiation in the Latin grammar. There he continued about five years, after which he was removed, first to Dublin, and then to Ballitore, where a school of great and rising reputation had then attracted considerable popularity, which was amply confirmed and justified by its subsequent history for three succeeding generations, during which it was conducted by men of

distinguished talent and learning, the descendants of the original master, Abraham Shackleton.\* It was in his twelfth year that Edmund, with his brothers, was placed in this eminent seminary. He soon attracted the more especial notice of his master, for the steadiness of his application, and the singular aptitude and vigour of his understanding. Attracted by the undoubted indications of unusual abilities, Mr Shackleton devoted a more than ordinary care to their cultivation, while he was no less careful to watch over his still delicate health, and moderate his study, so as to ensure the greatest profit to his mind, with the least fatigue to his body.

Among those of his schoolfellows most known in after life were Dr Brocklesby, the eminent physician; Dr Kearney; Thomas Bushe; and several other characters well known in the literary circles of Dublin and London. But the favoured friend of these years was Richard Shackleton, the only son and successor of his master. The chief memorials of Burke's early years are from the accounts given by this gentleman to an intimate friend. Among these may be noticed, his speculative temper—his love of solitary pursuits and musings—a certain reserve to strangers, who mostly regarded his brother Richard as the more bright and promising, an opinion not participated in by his master or father. He showed an early predilection for history and poetry, and appears to have also indulged to a considerable extent his love for the old romances. His affections were warm; and, among his youthful associates, he was more addicted to indulge in conversation, than in their lighter and more active amusements. In conversation, he early began to show the copious language, the mastery of his material, and the discursive and free communicativeness, which were such remarkable features of his maturer life. His early animosity against oppression, and sympathy with human sufferings and wrongs, was also at this time an object of remark. A rational and manly liberality of political feeling, checked by that love of order which is mostly attendant on a high state of moral civilization, was then, and has ever been, characteristic of the quaker society of Ballitore: and a spirit so congenial to the temper and genius of Burke, could not fail to obtain an early and vigorous hold of his affections. His early connexions were composed out of both those parties by whose animosities Ireland has been agitated, degraded, and depressed; to this may, in some measure, be attributed the early impartiality of his opinions on the subject of the penal laws against popery.

In the spring of 1744, he entered the University of Dublin, as a pensioner, under Dr Pelisier. In the university, while he applied with the necessary attention to the well-selected course of study prescribed to the students, he was induced, by the naturally comprehensive scope of his intellect, to take a far wider range than could have been suited to ordinary powers. The first prominent effect was not only perceptible in his conversation; it, in a great degree, diminished the attention which a youth of his habits of mind would otherwise have given to the studies of his class. These he simply pursued as parts of useful or essential reading, and not in the spirit of youth-

\* Of this family and school we shall have a distinct notice to offer.



ful emulation. In him, ambition was repressed by the sense of superiority. There were none who had the most remote pretension to be regarded as objects of competition: nor, among his fellow-students, is it to be presumed that there were many who could not perceive and allow the easy superiority of a mind not of their order. His general diligence in the studies of the place, is, nevertheless, satisfactorily ascertained by the scholarship which he obtained at the usual time. He had previously obtained at least one classical prize in his senior freshman year, as has been proved by the evidence of the prize book seen by Mr Prior, who mentions the circumstance in his memoir; and it is not to be supposed that he could have acquired the classical knowledge sufficient for the attainment of a scholarship, without having also been successful at the quarterly examinations. The error seems to have arisen by hastily concluding, from an assumption (probably correct) that he manifested no anxiety for college honours, and therefore he did not obtain them.

He is said to have given much attention to metaphysics, for which his writings indicate some talent and much inclination. Hume and Berkeley are mentioned as having more specially won his attention. His essay on the sublime and beautiful may be referred to as illustrative of this early tendency; and perhaps, in some slight degree, as affording a measure of his metaphysical powers. Of this we shall presently speak more at large. Happily, he was not seduced very far into a path so unprofitable; but, having early stored his mind with materials too various, weighty, useful, and abundant, to leave room or inclination for the word-splitting pursuits of the schools; and having an understanding far too earnest, active, and vigorous, to be satisfied with such reasonings and such results, he turned his attention to the interests of his country and mankind.

The same colloquial gifts, altogether, we believe, unparalleled in abundance, scope, or brilliancy, which form so very remarkable a portion of the character of Burke, were developed at an early age: we cannot doubt that these were mainly instrumental in the formation of his intellectual tendencies. The fluency, sometimes observable in persons of narrow attainment, may be the means of confirming prejudices; and, by trite repetitions, turning the intellect into fixed channels of thought and matter: it still oftener generates a habit of thinking crudely: the glib freedom of the rapid brain glides smoothly over depths, and, unchecked by difficulties it fails to perceive, quickly gains its point. On the other hand, it may have been observed, and often felt, that in proportion as the understanding becomes matured and stored with solid information, persons of considerable intelligence begin to find an increasing hesitation in all unstudied communication on the subject of their studies. To these rules Mr Burke was the exception; his copiousness, founded on the overflow of his matter, was maintained by faculties superior to the difficulties by which ordinary men are liable to be retarded and embarrassed. Habitually conversant with the depths and refinements of his own thoughts—rapid in his intellectual movements—keen to see and seize upon the relations of things—his common and familiar thoughts ranged far above and round the conversation of his associates. His spirit moved at ease under the armour

which might incumber less massive powers. Social in his temper and affections, he was no less himself in the lighter play of human intercourse. Ever cheerful, kindly, and full of the happiest spirits—playful from the activity of his mind—gentle and courteous from the very absence of all sense of emulation, he accommodated himself to the understandings of his company and to the temper of the hour. His fund of anecdote was inexhaustible; his narrative graceful, easy, and pointed; his wit was in such keeping with the occasion, that it was rather felt than distinctly noted; it was the brilliant and tinted ripple on the perpetual stream. With such rare and singular attractions, his company was acceptable in every circle, and he rose almost at once to a distinction beyond his standing or station in society. The same qualifications of address and conversation which drew from Dr Johnson the well-known remark, that “if Burke were to go into a stable to give directions about his horse, the hostler would say, we have had an extraordinary man here,”—an observation frequently repeated under various forms by Johnson—was often and most characteristically exemplified by very many incidents to be found among the biographers of Burke.

Among the remains of his earliest literary productions, during this interval of his life, a translation of part of the second Georgic of Virgil, written in his sixteenth year, is very remarkable for the power, harmony, and finish of its style, which we have no hesitation in affirming to be at least equal to Dryden’s best execution in the same work. Nor are the few specimens which we have seen of his attempts at original composition inferior in their general merits; so as indeed to prove that he must have occupied no less a place as one of the first of our poets, than he was destined to fill as a statesman and an orator. He was indeed an early and devoted student of the higher class of English poets—a study congenial to his taste and understanding, and yielding to none as the best and purest vehicle of profound and just thinking on man and his concerns. Young he could repeat: Milton he studied in the spirit recommended by Horace—“*Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.*” It was his custom in after life to recommend this great poet, as displaying the loftiest range of human intellect of any other English writer: and we cannot doubt but many must, in the perusal of his speeches, have felt how deeply the tone and manner of the poet had blended with, and tinged the conceptions of, the orator. There was indeed a strong analogy of intellectual frame between them—two master spirits, each the first in his class—the same high and unwearying range of intelligence, the same enthusiasm, the same powers of remote and original combination, and the same power of giving tint and form to their thoughts. In both there was an earnest tendency to seek the vast, the profound, the solemn, and the wonderful—the same deep reverence for antiquity—the same firm and free sense of the inalienable rights of humanity. If the orator was less than the poet in the faculty of imagination, he will be allowed to have been superior in the grasp of a most vigorous and practical reason.

Among the earliest efforts of Burke’s pen, which may be regarded as indicative of his future career, were some essays, in imitation of Dr Lucas, then in the height of his reputation. Of this person we have



already given a sketch, in the course of this volume.\* The writings of Lucas, though patriotic in their design, and not without much grounded application in their general statements, were yet pernicious in their tendency: the complaints and accusations which they breathed, in language of the utmost violence, were traced to wrong causes, and fallacious principles, by an intellect keen to observe, but unequal to grapple with remote consequences, and complicated distinctions. Burke, the main force of whose reason lay in the clear comprehension of elementary views, and who, beyond any writer yet known to us, seems to have possessed his knowledge in the compendious form of first principles,—was struck by the mischief and absurdity of those mis-statements, the effect of which upon the vulgar was then heightened by the utter ignorance of political science which prevailed in the country. He drew up several essays, in which he imitated the style of the Doctor so closely, that the deception was for a time universal. Setting out with the principles of his essays, he followed them out to their legitimate consequences, and thus exposed the absurdity and the danger of those democratic notions which are concealed by the partial statements and inconsequences of their advocates.

Having completed the usual period of the under-graduate course in the university, Burke took the degree of Bachelor, at the commencements in February, 1748; and, shortly after, proceeded to London, to keep his terms at the Middle Temple. His first impressions of London are preserved among fragments of his correspondence, which have been printed by Mr Prior and others. He was struck with the eloquence of the debates,—remarks strongly on the depravation of the stage, and much impressed by Westminster Abbey, in noticing which, he writes:—"I have not the least doubt that the finest poem in the language—I mean Milton's *Il Penseroso*—was composed in the long resounding aisle of a mouldering cloister, or ruined abbey." The thought is valuable as it presents a transient attitude and frame of the writer's own mind: it was the breathing of solemn meditation—the echo of the races of the past—the changes and vicissitudes of ages—the memory of great and famous names—and all the deep affections of our nature, which such recollections are so likely to awaken among the habitations of the dead of history—that crowded round the mind of Mr Burke, and struck forth tones in harmony with the blind old bard: the tone of spirit which so often finds its place in his writings and speeches, and to which he seems ever raised by the expanding grasp of his thoughts, which seem to wind upward in larger circles, till the subject seems to embrace time and the interests of mankind.

In London, he soon fell in with several of his fellow-students; and many letters are said to be yet extant, in which the high estimation of his talents, entertained by these, is strongly expressed. His health appears to have sustained interruptions, which may in part be attributed to severe study, and partly to the natural tenderness of his constitution.

In 1751, he came over to Dublin, and took his degree as master of arts.



He soon began to feel disinclined to legal studies. They are hardly, if at all, to be reconciled with those strong inclinations to literature which grew more and more upon him. His philosophic temper was not easily satisfied with the narrow and, in some degree, factitious range of a purely artificial science; nearly related, it is true, to the nature and tendencies of man, but little bringing into evidence, and little directly regarding, those primary foundations on which all human institutions invariably, though darkly, repose. Of this Mr Burke has left the record of his opinion, in his spirited sketch of Mr Grenville. "He was bred to a profession. He was bred to the law, which is, in my opinion, one of the first and noblest of human sciences—a science which does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding than all the other kinds of learning put together; but it is not apt, except in persons very happily born, to open and to liberalize the mind exactly in the same proportion." Deducting something from the complimentary language, for the circumstances of a speech in the House of Commons, the rest (the purpose of the sentence) expresses the sense of Mr Burke: the clear and broad range of history, politics, poetry, and speculation, could not but reluctantly be resigned for the bounded compass of the special pleader's desk. Accordingly, it appears that Mr Burke was at this time on the look-out for some more appropriate direction of his faculties. The professorship of logic in the university of Glasgow became vacant; and, according to the best authorities, he made up his mind to offer himself as a candidate. His chance of success may be easily estimated as not very high, without any disparagement of his capabilities. Glasgow has produced many able and original professors; but we think it just to say, that original powers, of the very highest order, cannot be of themselves the ordinary ground of election. There is no way in which they can be fairly put into evidence in the case of a young candidate. The known works of an advanced lecturer may be justly appreciated; but the electors of a university matured in *old* knowledge can, in few instances, be competent to judge of the pretensions founded on original genius. The competition must, therefore, be ever founded upon the mere erudition, and the established reputation, of the candidates. According to Mr Taylor, principal of the Glasgow university, Burke stood candidate for the logical professorship in 1752, or 1753, and failed,—the successful candidate having been a Mr James Clow.\* From this excursion, which he extended to France, he soon returned, with fresh alacrity, to his studies in London.

For some following years, his pursuits were desultory. He occupied himself with various and extensive reading, and in the projection of several works. He was in the habit of frequenting the Grecian coffee-house, where he contracted some agreeable intimacies: as his conversation seldom failed to attract the admiring attention of the persons who resorted to the same place. He also often visited the theatre, then a popular amusement. He had, soon after his first settling in London, formed an acquaintance with Murphy, the actor, who introduced him to Garrick, Macklin, and other chief performers. Macklin had set up a debating society, at which he frequently exercised his oratorical gifts.

\* Letter quoted by Mr Prior.

His acquaintance with Garrick soon ripened into an intimacy; and he thus became gradually introduced to the extensive circle of eminent persons whom this great actor was in the habit of entertaining.

In the mean time, he added to his means by literary occupations. He is mentioned by most of his biographers to have written much for the periodicals of the day. Among the first of his essays which have become distinctly known to the public, his vindication of natural society, in imitation of Bolingbroke, may be selected. In this remarkable paper, he exposes the infidel opinions of the day, by carrying them to their extreme consequences. The happy adaptation to his purpose, of the style and manner of that splendid *charlatan*; the admirable sagacity which, in a narrow compass, selected the most effective considerations, and so exhausted his subject, that the ablest writers who afterwards took it up could do little more than repeat his arguments; and the soundness of the views in religion and politics which he enforced,—have been the admiration of the best of his critics and readers. But it has been observed, and not without reason, that he furnished the armoury of his opponents, the infidels and democrats of the age; and that Godwin and Paine have drawn their main arguments from his powerful ironies. The remark is just: in some measure, it involves these writers in the consequence of absurdity; but, from a full consideration of the influence of fallacy on the crowd, and upon the extravagant lengths to which the most ludicrous conclusions may be received, in the fanaticism of sect and party, it must be admitted that irony is an unsafe weapon in defence of truth and justice, as there are few jests so absurd as not to be accepted as arguments against religion and social order by perverted minds.

The first of his writings which attracted public notice, in any way proportioned to its deserts, was the celebrated Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful. Its publication was at once attended with unbounded applause; while it elicited the most gratifying tributes of admiration from those who were allowed to be the most qualified to estimate its merits. Johnson gave the warmest praise. His father testified his approbation by a large remittance, which, with the sale of the volume, enabled him to extricate himself from some pecuniary embarrassments. On the merit of this essay, it cannot be necessary to enter at length: it has long since experienced the sifting to which all such writings are destined. His hasty theories have been rejected, while his eloquent descriptions, and sagacious and discriminating observations, have been retained. But little in which we can unqualifiedly concur has yet been written on the subject; and it would be impossible to follow his biographers in a more detailed critique, without referring to authorities with whom we have not the good fortune to agree, or stating opinions which would not be more fortunate with our readers. The point of present concern is, that the publication was an event in his life of much and decisive importance. His acquaintance was widely sought, and he became the most distinguished figure in the brilliant circle which Boswell has so strikingly drawn. The sagacious penetration of Johnson is in nothing more displayed than in his prompt and true estimate of Burke, and the depth of the impression is shown by the frequent repetition of the remark of Burke's superiority to all



others;—that he was the “first everywhere;”—that “if you were to be driven by a shower of rain to seek shelter under the same gateway with him, you must in a few minutes perceive his superiority over common men.” Nor was there any occasion through his life, in which the mention of Burke did not draw some comment to the same effect from one who recognised no other rival in colloquial ability.

Some little time previous to this advance of his reputation, Burke had become the husband of a woman in every way suited to his taste and disposition. Having at one time fallen into a condition of distressing debility, from the continued studies, and severe mental and bodily exertions of literature, he applied to Dr Nugent for advice. The doctor, equally distinguished as a physician and a fine scholar, won by the captivating address of Burke, and having observed that his case was such as to require, not merely rest and continued watchfulness, but also those attentions which can only be found in the bosom of domestic life, invited him to remain under his care in his own family. Burke assented; and thus, while the skill and care of the friendly physician, in a short time restored him to health, he formed an acquaintance with Miss Nugent, which soon matured into attachment, and led to their union for life. As they were both endowed with the warmest affections, and with tastes essential to domestic happiness, this union turned out to be an unfailing resource to Burke through the labours and trials of many years.

We now come to the incidents which first led to his political career. Notwithstanding the eminent reputation which he had attained, he was still for some anxious years left to the embarrassments attendant upon a small allowance of £200 a-year from his father, with the precarious additions wrung from literary exertion; and, in despair of success, had frequently turned his mind to America, from which he was only retained by the strong opposition of his father and other friends. He was indeed in a fair way to present one of the numerous illustrations how little celebrity avails for the preferment of its possessor, unless by the intervention of those common incidents and interests by which ordinary men advance in the world. Burke even now occupied a distinguished position among the most eminent persons of the day, for wit, learning, and social taste, and was perhaps fully appreciated by the ablest judges of intellectual worth, when the earl of Charlemont, who had a well-earned influence in Irish affairs, introduced him to Mr William Gerard Hamilton, in 1759. In consequence of this introduction, and of the incessant and unquestionable indications of first-rate ability, presented in his most ordinary conversation, he obtained in 1761, the appointment of private secretary to Mr Hamilton, when this gentleman was sent over to Ireland as secretary under lord Halifax. Such an appointment to one, who, like Mr Burke, could not fail to display powers equal to the utmost necessities of that period of continual emergency, was an essential step to further success. It cannot now on any satisfactory grounds be distinctly ascertained what the services were, in which he was chiefly engaged. But there is enough of indirect circumstance to place it out of doubt, that his labours were considerable and unremitting, and such as to elicit the entire approbation, and even gratitude of the higher members of the Irish administration.



He speaks himself of "a long and laborious attendance;" and Mr Prior states that he had received intimations from persons of very high authority, that Mr Burke was chiefly employed in the management of the Irish house of commons, as deputy to Mr Hamilton. We cannot, without further grounds, rely much on mere opinion; and much incline to doubt whether it were not more likely that Burke's known, peculiar, and to some extent singular power of digesting documents, arranging masses of matter, and advising wherever precise and discriminating insight was to be sought for, was the main part of his service. Much of what was called managing the Irish house, was service not very much adapted to Mr Burke's moral or intellectual temper, and in part also involves a degree of publicity inconsistent with any doubts being left on the question. The main ground, we suspect, for such a conjecture is derived from the pension of £300 a-year, bestowed upon him through the influence of primate Stone, and Hamilton. But the term admits of at least two constructions. There is no doubt of the fact, that he was engaged in all the chief measures of the administration, and that he derived both reputation and experience, such as to awaken rational expectations of further advancement in the field of politics. But the manly conduct which led to the termination of his service, utterly refutes all conjectures which are in the least inconsistent with the proud and high integrity of his reputation. We quite agree with Mr Prior in concluding, that no better proof could be found of the high consideration enjoyed by its object, than the friendship and familiar intimacy of Flood, Langrishe, Monck Mason, Lord Pery, and indeed every individual himself deserving of respect.

Among the habits of Mr Burke at this time of his life, there is one which, while it indicates strongly the elevated character of his intellectual tastes, is otherwise interesting for the light it reflects on the great seat of learning, from which he and so many noble spirits have emanated. It is said to have been his general habit while in Ireland, to pass several evenings of the week in college, among the fellows whom he had formerly known, or with whom he became now acquainted: with these often gifted, and in most instances, learned men, he had the most grateful opportunity to indulge and improve his literary tastes. The niceties and refinements of the chief ancient and modern writers—the many profound and curious questions in morals and metaphysics, which have exercised the best wits of every age; the questions in history and antiquities to which so much interest could be given by the entertainers and by the guest, may have afforded the main topics of their conversation. Among the proofs of the estimation in which his abilities as a scholar were held, it is mentioned that Dr Wilson, a senior fellow, then highly reputed for his attainments, on some of these occasions urged that Mr Burke should undertake a translation of Livy. Such an effort would have offered many attractions, as a mere literary undertaking, and it must be allowed that Burke was supereminently endowed for it. But his time was then engaged to the full, and his mind had become pledged to politics.

During his continuance in Ireland he made many excursions, among which the most memorable were those visits which he occasionally paid to his friends in Ballitore.

We have mentioned incidentally, that his services were rewarded with a pension of £300 a-year: this pension was on the Irish establishment, and during pleasure. It was understood by Mr Burke to be the well-earned reward of his public services; but it is evident that Mr Hamilton saw the matter in a very different light. As this is one of the many transactions in the history of Mr Burke, which has been misrepresented by the malice of enmity or faction, we shall select a few extracts from his own letter to Mr Flood, which will amount to a full statement of the facts, so far as is essential to our purpose. Mr Burke begins his letter with the significant sentence—"My dear Flood, I thank you for your kind and most obliging letters; you are a person whose good offices are not snares, and to whom one may venture to be obliged without danger to his honour." After a few further words, he proceeds, "It is very true, that there is an eternal rupture between me and Hamilton, which was on my side neither sought nor provoked; for though his conduct in public affairs has been for a long time directly contrary to my opinions, very reproachful to himself, and disgusting to me; and though in private he has not fulfilled one of his engagements to me, yet I was so uneasy and awkward at coming to a breach, where I had once a close and intimate friendship, that I continued with a kind of desperate fidelity to adhere to his cause and person." . . . . "The occasion of our difference was not any act whatsoever on my part,—it was entirely on his, by a voluntary but most insolent and intolerable demand, amounting to no less than a claim of servitude during the whole course of my life, without leaving me at any time a power either of getting forward with honour, or of retiring with tranquillity. This was really and truly the substance of his demand upon me, to which I need not tell you I refused, with some degree of indignation, to submit. On this we ceased to see each other, or to correspond, a good while before you left London. He then commenced through the intervention of others, a negotiation with me, in which he showed as much of meanness in his proposals, as he had done of arrogance in his demands; but, as all these proposals were vitiated by the taint of that servitude with which they were all mixed, his negotiation came to nothing. He grounded these monstrous claims (such as were never heard before in this country,) on that pension he had procured for me through colonel Cunningham, the late primate, and lord Halifax; for, through all that series of persons, this paltry business was contrived to pass, &c. . . . Yet, to get rid of him completely, and not to carry a memorial of such a person about me, I offered to transmit it to his attorney in trust for him. This offer he thought proper to accept." The money was thus paid elsewhere for eighteen months after Mr Burke had relinquished it. And the fact is evidenced by a treasury memorandum, in which the grant appears dated 19th April, 1763; the assignment from Mr Burke, 10th April, 1764. These facts, which so amply destroy all reports in any way unfavourable to Mr Burke, were brought before the public for the first time by Mr Prior; and were only ascertained from the accident of the letter above quoted, having been found among the papers of Flood, by his executors.

No further interview took place between Mr Burke and Hamilton.

In returning the pension, Mr Burke sent at the same time a parting letter for his late patron, which Mr Hamilton "many years after," writes Mr Prior, "had the candour to confess, was one of the finest compositions he had ever read." A remark of the late bishop O'Beirne's, mentioned also by Mr Prior in his notice of this incident, ought not to be omitted here. "Believe me, if there be an obscure point in the life or conduct of Edmund Burke, the moment the explanation arrives, it will be sure to redound to his honour."

Among the numerous incidents related by Mr Burke's biographers which took place during this interval, was his acquaintance with Barry. Poor Barry was taken up by him, and at considerable expense and exertion brought first before the public, and then enabled to study in France and Italy. In the course of this period, as often after, he was watched over with the tenderness of a parent; his indiscretions checked—his genius fostered—and his wants supplied. While the epistolary correspondence, thus originated, remains among the most perfect models we can recollect of the profoundest moral wisdom, and the most admirable criticisms, we are content here with this very summary notice of the incidents of a connexion so honourable to Mr Burke, because they must hereafter be very fully detailed in Barry's memoir. We shall therefore only pause to notice the slander which has followed this, as it has most other of Mr Burke's good deeds,—what else indeed should slander assail? It was invidiously observed, that Mr Burke contrived to lay the Marquis of Rockingham under contribution for an occasion of which he took the merit to himself. To this the answer is brief: Mr Burke took no merit to himself; it was no part of his character to arrogate claims for service to his friends, nor to boast of his own goodness. If it were, he might have truly said that it is far easier to a proud and generous mind to give, than to solicit; and that when a favour is asked for another by one in Mr Burke's position at that time, something for self is resigned; an obligation is incurred, and such obligations have their limit. But in fact Mr Burke contributed to the utmost extent that his circumstances could admit. And in the end it must be admitted, that the assumption of munificence has no existence save in the invention of one who assumed it, for the purpose of casting a silly though malicious reproach.

Mr Burke's return to London was attended with more auspicious expectations than he had previously known. His reputation for political talent and knowledge had become general; his confidence in his own powers, as well as his knowledge of public affairs, and experience in official transactions, had become matured. In addition to the discipline of office, he had directed his mind with a view to the employment of his talents, and made himself master of the details of those questions, then before, or likely to come before, the public. In his legal studies, he had not only obtained a thorough insight into the machinery and workings of the constitution; but by the exercise of his unparalleled powers of generalizing, he had attained a profound possession of those universal principles which govern the changes and turns of human affairs, and regulate the events of human councils, and the revolutions of empires. In attaining expertness common to many, he had gathered that wisdom known to few, and best described



in the language of Milton: "something of prophetic strain," the growth of "old experience" and retired study.

With a high reputation, and such gifts, Mr Burke could not have far to seek for occasion. In 1765, Mr Fitzherbert, a member of the club, introduced him to the marquis of Rockingham, who, on being immediately after called to the head of affairs, appointed him his private secretary. This fortunate incident, the beginning of his brilliant political career, was nearly frustrated by the suspicions of the duke of Newcastle, who, having heard that Mr Burke was an Irishman, and also that he was a papist, and had studied at St Omers, hurried to communicate his fears and objections to the marquis. The marquis happily took the honourable and open course of communicating this information to Mr Burke, who satisfied him quickly and easily of the falsehood and absurdity of such suspicions. The marquis was satisfied; but the proud honour of Mr Burke was wounded by such imputations, so lightly taken up; and he declined any further continuance of the proposed connexion, observing to the marquis, that the reserve which was likely to result from such impressions, would imperceptibly cloud the confidence which ought to exist between them, and that he could not reconcile it to his own feelings to accept of a half-confidence. The marquis, won by the high and generous frankness of Mr Burke, assured him that no such impression remained, and that he felt the highest respect and esteem for his character and conduct, and should always treat him with the most entire confidence. The incident is stated on the authority of lord Charlemont, who observes, "Neither had he [the marquis] at any time, or his friends after his death, the least reason to repent of that confidence." The first important consequence of this compact was, the immediate introduction of Mr Burke to the great stage of his after life: an arrangement was made by the marquis, by which he was elected member for Wendover.

Little can be gained by the repetition of the numerous stories which the numerous biographers of Mr Burke have repeated, and which are in the possession of all who read biography, unless where they cannot be omitted, because faction has appropriated them for its purposes. It will also be little to any purpose to which we feel pledged to attempt the disentanglement of the petty questions of party intrigue, on which it is difficult to arrive at, or at least communicate certainty without far larger details than belong to this memoir. The private motives of kings, or of their detractors, and the influences which originate their councils, if they can be allowed to be history, are such, but in a very subordinate sense. Of the politics of this period it is difficult to speak precisely, within those limits which we are compelled to keep in view. A full view of the state of parties would be desirable as illustrative of the history of Mr Burke, and of those eminent persons with whom he was immediately connected or opposed: such might best be drawn from the political writings of Mr Burke himself, confirmed as his statements are by all that can be ascertained of the history of his day. To these, and to other contemporary documents, with the more elaborate details of Messrs Prior, Croly, Bissett, and other biographers, we must refer those who desire to look more minutely upon the interior workings of parties and administrations;

we must, from a spacious and complicated scope, select the main features; and happily for our purpose, all that is now important to history, or to the character of Mr Burke, is fully comprehended in a few main events. That time was the commencement of a great period in the history of modern Europe—perhaps of mankind;—the great period of transition which is the introduction to this division of our labour. And valuable to Ireland, and even to humanity, as we must regard the life of the illustrious subject of this memoir; yet, in our view, and according to the estimate we have framed of our undertaking, its main importance is, that it presents the occasion for the more detailed illustration of the important theorem which we have endeavoured to state. The conduct of men, or of administrations, was in one view but incidental to the profound, diffusive, and irresistible, though secret working machinery, which matures and governs all the greater revolutions of time; those changes which the historian is so often led to refer to the folly and wisdom of men; like those philosophers who are known to have pored so long and closely over the processes of physical nature, as to invest them with an imaginary power, and transfer to senseless matter the attributes of creative mind. Without that precise apprehension of the direction of human tendency, which in his time there was little to render distinctly apparent to human observation, Mr Burke, raising his mind above the floating mists of circumstance and existing expediency, reached to the more universal and standard principles of national polity, and of the social system. To whatever extent his sagacity may have reached—and that of no mortal man reached farther in the anticipation of the future—still the main views which he enforced by eloquence and action, are in strict accordance with the truth of things, and have their place in the science of history: they justly represent the period to which they were applied; and, so far as they go, rightly apply to its events. It is for this reason that, in the life and political conduct of Mr Burke, we are presented with a more simple and elementary aspect of the greatest events with which his name is connected: and they appear more appropriately the introduction to the great transitional period of which they are the commencements. When, however, we undertake to vindicate the conduct of Mr Burke, it is by no means any part of our design to assert his freedom from error and infirmity. While his profound and masterly intellect kept him in the line of principle, the great central path of elementary truth; his wide and rapid imagination, governed by strong and inflammable enthusiasm, may often enough have precipitated his wing too far, or given exaggerated form to his suspicions. Yet, even in such cases, it will, we think, be always easy to show that, in these errors, there was a clear ground of right and truth. In the outset of his political existence he was more guided by general theorems, and by the rules of political and moral science, than by that cautious tact which is the fruit of experience alone.

The finances of England had been reduced by an expensive war, and the minds of the people were universally irritated by increased burthens. It had been up to this period the policy of the cabinet to display little if any deference to public opinion. The violence of party warfare, and the struggles of combining and dissolving administra-

tions, at length became the means of awakening the attention and the passions of the country to take part in the contention—and like the anarch old, in Milton, “by decision more embroil the fray.” The genius of Chatham had raised the honour, and increased the dominion and prosperity of England, but left an inheritance of difficulties to his successors. His proud and irrespective course in which he had wielded with almost despotic power the strength of the kingdom, had paved the way for the depression of the aristocratic influence. A succession of feeble ministers—the embarrassments they had to contend with—the interference of popular opinion—and the struggles of the court for the maintenance of its authority—seem to have completed the change. A secret influence—a power behind the throne, greater than the throne—was held forth to the people as the main source of misrule, by the great statesman who could brook no authority but his own. This phantom struck terror among all ranks. It became the cant-word of faction; the demagogues took it up, and it became the favourite grievance of the day. It was assumed that the court had conspired to govern by means of an interior and irresponsible cabinet, to which the ostensible administration was to be but as a puppet; at a time when the king was driven to the utmost difficulties to find an administration equal to the most ordinary conduct of affairs. Successive cabinets had been formed. Lord Bute had been followed by Mr Grenville, an able financier, but utterly devoid of statesman-like qualities. Anxious as he was to remedy the difficulties of the exchequer; and, at the same time, to appease the public discontents, it occurred to him that the object might be best attained by taxing the colonies. The American States, subject to light burthens, deriving advantages from the parent country, and yielding nothing directly in return, seemed to present a fair and popular field for revenue. He framed the stamp act, a measure highly popular in England; though from the first denounced and opposed by her best and ablest statesmen. The flame of discontent and resentment was at once raised in America. There, while the grievance was deeply felt, the policy seemed to strike more deeply still: their trade was clogged with nearly insuperable impediments; but their very constitution as a people was struck at the roots by the assertion of a power which had heretofore been unheard of, and which infringed the clear understanding of all their previous connexion with the mother country. It was the assumption of a right not asserted when, from its weakness, the colony was really dependent, and not likely to be now admitted for the first time, when a large population, considerable wealth, and an importance universally recognised, had naturally produced a sense of independent strength and a spirit of resistance in the descendants of England. The right of taxation was denied, and strong remonstrances from the American provinces were echoed at home by the most prominent members of opposition. The Americans had recourse to active measures of combination to resist and impede the operation of the obnoxious measure. The effect was felt at home by the mercantile interests, which were, to a large amount, involved in the American trade; payments were suspended abroad, and the necessity of the suspension was admitted at home. On the other hand, the



right of taxation was fiercely asserted by popular feeling; the king was bent on the maintenance of an imaginary branch of prerogative; and it seemed equally difficult for ministers to advance or recede. The embarrassment will appear the more serious, from the consideration that the actual principles of the great question which thus originated were not understood. It was not yet fully reduced to its simple and consistent elements, a question of right exclusively applicable to colonial jurisdiction, and involving the distinction between the external government of a colony and the internal government of a province. But we must reserve this point for a more expanded statement farther on.

The country was involved in this great, and, as it turned out, leading embarrassment, when the Grenville administration, having become unequal to stem the popular torrent, were dismissed, and, after a vain attempt to conciliate Mr Pitt, proposals were accepted by the Rockingham party.

Such were the circumstances under which the political life of Burke commenced. The marquis of Rockingham was, like Mr Burke, a whig of the Revolution; if regard be had to the soundest principles of civil liberty, and truly constitutional affections and principles, not to be placed lower than the best and worthiest of those to whom the helm of affairs could have been intrusted, when the great emergency of the moment appeared to call for a due respect for rights, and a stanch and loyal affection for the throne. But the marquis was placed under difficulties not fully appreciated, and he is represented very generally as subject to some unfortunate disqualifications. Proud, retired within the cold reserve of his order, not practically conversant with business, devoid of the tact which can rapidly seize on the true indications of the time, his knowledge of state affairs lay more in principle than practice. Insensible to the growing infusion of the democratic element which was beginning to impose popular conciliation as a part of prudence: unobservant also of the inroads then recently gained, and still gaining, on the influence of his order, he was deficient in caution, and disposed to carry measures with the high hand of power. And, in these sentiments, his secretary, far more able and informed, but equally unpractised, agreed. They came to the question relying on their disposition to do right. They were pressed on one part by the Grenville party, who insisted on supporting their own unpopular act by force; on the other, by the remonstrances of America, backed by the complaints of the British commercial parties; the people were for asserting the authority of England; the king determined to defend the prerogative of the crown. Under this combination of difficulties they took the only course that was in reality open to them; a course which, unfortunately for England and America, stopped half-way. They began by repealing the obnoxious act; but, having made this wise step towards conciliation, they bowed to the determination alike imposed by the king and people, and passed a law declaring the right of Great Britain to legislate for America, and censuring the refractory conduct of the colonies. As this declaration has been censured, and as it involves some difficulties, we shall presently notice it more fully.

Among the biographers of Mr Burke, the most friendly speak in a slighting tone of this administration. The grounds of their contempt do not appear very satisfactorily stated; and there are, it must be observed, many reasons for a contrary view of its character. We cannot pretend to settle a question so comparatively unimportant. On consideration of the censures repeated by several historians, we cannot resist the impression that they have, in general, too readily adopted the party tone of the period. Historians are well warranted in the application to past events of views derived from political science; but there is a narrow limit, beyond which such reasonings are inapplicable to the conduct of public men. Subsequent events cannot be too scrupulously taken into account: the actual position of parties cannot be too precisely estimated, and rigidly allowed for. In the present case, the actual public results of the Rockingham administration are too lightly passed over; the difficulties under which they came into office have been too little dwelt on. The infirmities of the supposed character of the marquis, and the inexperience of Mr Burke at the time, have been strongly stated, and their great comparative merits suppressed. The difficulties under which they acted were great, and may be briefly stated. They were not only assailed by the ordinary opponents of every administration—those who looked for their places, those who took or were pledged to opposite views—but they were in the hapless disfavour of the court; the “household troops,” as they were termed by Mr Burke in the defence which he afterwards made for the repeal of the stamp act, all voted against them on the question. “The noble lord who then conducted affairs, and his worthy colleagues, while they trembled at the prospect of such distresses as you have since brought upon yourselves, were not afraid steadily to look in the face that glaring and dazzling influence, at which the eyes of eagles have blanched. He looked in the face of one of the ablest—and, let me say, not the most scrupulous oppositions that perhaps ever was in this house—withstood it unaided by even one of the usual supports of administration.”\* The charge of timidity and of feebleness must at least be allowed to stand on bad foundations; it is evident that, with the exception of one man, none others could be found to trace back a step so false and pernicious as the stamp act. “The household troops openly revolted. The allies of ministry—those I mean who supported some of their measures, but refused responsibility for any—endeavoured to undermine their credit, and to take ground which would be fatal to the success of the very cause which they would be thought to countenance. The question of repeal was brought on by the ministry in the committee of this house, in the very instant when it was known that more than one court negotiation was carrying on with the heads of the opposition. Everything on every side was full of traps and mines. Earth below shook; heaven above menaced; all the elements of ministerial safety were dissolved. It was in the midst of this chaos of plots and counterplots; it was in the midst of this complicated warfare against public opposition and private treachery, that the firmness of that noble person was put to

\* Mr Burke's speech on American taxation.

the proof. He never stirred from his ground; no not an inch. He remained firm and determined in principle, in measure, and in conduct. He practised no managements. He secured no retreat. He sought no apology.”\*

The court disfavour was augmented by other measures of a similar character. It was seconded by much popular clamour, but compensated by the earnest approval of all the trading interests. But it sealed the fate of the Rockingham administration. The Pitt and Grenville parties added their clamour to the hostility of the court. They were vilified and misrepresented by their opponents, while it was privately determined to dismiss them at court. We are more diffuse on this incident of Mr Burke's life than we otherwise should wish, because we cannot avoid feeling that some wrong has been done in not making the full allowance for the general state of facts. Too much is referred to considerations of no real weight. Dr Bissett, with whose general view of Mr Burke and his politics we concur, in this instance, as in a few others, too readily seizes on unimportant anecdotes; not, we submit, very amply authenticated, as regards accuracy, for an event which stands on obvious and sufficient grounds. It is not quite fair to trace a writer's motives; but, in this instance, we cannot help feeling that this worthy biographer has been misled by his unwillingness to admit the reality of an interior influence in the cabinet. The charge of incapacity is not borne out by the measures; and, notwithstanding some allowances which we have already stated, we doubt whether too firm an integrity, and too direct a defiance to court authority, was not far more effective than inexperience or any alleged incapacity. Some degree of compromise was at the moment inevitable, and the declaratory act was the least that could be made to the will of the king, and the prejudices of the people. They stood alone in displaying a just sense of the commercial interests of the country; and the resolution against a general war claims—equally against the sense of the court—no less regard for the rights of the subject. With respect to the result, their policy was quite successful; in the colonies the discontent was abandoned; the usual taxes paid; trade fell at once into its old routine; and civil authority was restored. And there is no direct reason to assert that any further consequences would have occurred, but for the subsequent measures of the succeeding administrations. It may be said of the Rockingham party, and of no other, that their continuance in office for some years would, to all appreciable probability, have entirely turned away the disasters which were so soon to be brought upon the kingdom and her colonies. It was long after stated by Mr Penn, at the bar of the house of lords, that the colonies would have been pacified, and no further consequences would have occurred, if the policy of the Rockingham administration had been adhered to.

On the dismissal of his party, Mr Burke, without more than two days' delay, retired to pay a visit to his friends in Ireland. To this he was perhaps urged by a delicate pride, which repelled the imputation of staying to be looked for. He had no bargain to make of his

\* Speech on American taxation.



principles, though he could not but be fully conscious that he had become an object of universal notice, and a fair mark for the usual overtures of party. His outset had been brilliant, and, whatever was the unpopularity of his party, he was yet at that period of his career when the new aspirant was considered at that time undecided as to party, and ready to follow the road most directly leading to office. He could not fail to be courted by the winners in the game of party,—the high and impracticable tenacity of his temper was unknown. But Mr Burke had selected his own path; the favour of courts and profits of office were to find him there, and there alone.

The difficulty of forming a ministry to succeed that of the marquis of Rockingham was very great. His government had been less disapproved by the sense of the country than most which had preceded; and this, with the number of cabinets which had been formed and broken up within a short interval, was the main ground of the impression which existed of a court policy to attain independence of all. It may be an added consideration in behalf of the party going out, that the difficulty here mentioned was mainly caused by the extreme views of most who might be expected to replace them, and these views soon decided the fate of the colonies.

But, before this event, Pitt again came in and formed a cabinet famous for its composition of heterogeneous and unapt materials. We should not need to dwell upon it here, but that it has been immortalized by a celebrated passage in one of Mr Burke's speeches. After a splendid and just eulogium on lord Chatham, he proceeded, "For a wise man, he seemed to me at that time to be governed too much by general maxims. I speak with the freedom of history, and I hope without offence. One or two of those maxims, flowing from an opinion not the most indulgent to our unhappy species, and surely a little too general, led him into measures that were greatly mischievous to himself; and for that reason, among others, perhaps fatal to his country; measures, the effects of which, I am afraid, are for ever incurable. He made an administration so chequered and speckled—he put together a piece of joinery so craftily indented and whimsically dove-tailed—a cabinet so variously inlaid—such a piece of diversified mosaic—such a tessellated pavement without cement—here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white—patriots and courtiers, king's friends and republicans—whigs and tories—treacherous friends and open enemies—that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same boards stared at each other, and were obliged to ask, 'Sir, your name? Sir, you have the advantage of me. Mr Such-a-one, I beg ten thousand pardons.' I venture to say it did so happen that persons had a single office divided between them, who had never spoken to each other in their lives, until they found themselves, they knew not how, pigging together, heads and points, in the same trucklebed. Sir, in consequence of this arrangement, having put so much the larger part of his enemies and opponents into power, the confusion was such that his own principles could not possibly have any effect or influence in the conduct of affairs. If ever he fell into a fit of the gout, or if any other cause withdrew him from public cares,

principles directly the contrary were sure to predominate. When he had executed his plan, he had not an inch of ground to stand upon. When he had accomplished his scheme of administration, he was no longer a minister. When his face was hid but for a moment, his whole system was on a wide sea, without chart or compass. The gentlemen, his particular friends, who, with the names of various departments of ministry, were admitted to serve as if they acted a part under him, with a modesty that becomes all men, and with a confidence in him which was justified even in its extravagance by his superior abilities, had never in any instance presumed upon any opinion of their own. Deprived of his guiding influence, they were whirled about, the sport of every gust, and easily driven into any port; and as those who joined with them in manning the vessel were the most directly opposite to him in opinions, measures, and character, and far the most artful and powerful of the set, they easily prevailed so as to seize upon the vacant, unoccupied, and derelict minds of his friends, and instantly they turned the vessel out of the whole course of his policy. As if it were to insult as well as to betray him, even long before the close of the first session of his administration, when everything was publicly transacted with great parade in his name, they made an act declaring it to be highly just and expedient to raise a revenue in America. For even then, Sir, even before this splendid orb was entirely set, and while the western horizon was in a blaze with his descending glory, on the opposite quarter of the heavens arose another luminary, and, for his hour, became lord of the ascendant.\* This passage—which, notwithstanding its metaphorical abundance, is not less remarkable for the figures of rhetoric, than for the condensed precision with which it represents, sums up, and explains the history of an administration—may serve to convey as much of that history as our purpose demands. The great rival luminary adverted to in the concluding sentence was Mr Charles Townshend, who, as chancellor of the exchequer in the succeeding administration, may be said to have really originated the series of steps which led on the American war. To this point, therefore, we shall presently return.

The admirers of Mr Burke were now not less numerous than the educated portion of the public; and among those in any way distinguishable for any intellectual gift or accomplishment, it may be doubted if any other individual stood so high. As an orator he was already considered the “first man in the commons” before the dissolution of the Rockingham administration. Johnson, who always called him the first of men, denied him wit alone; and yet, if this denial be allowed, it will be hard to say what wit is, otherwise than by the pedantry of a very curt definition. The fault of much of the most striking passages of his oratory, and that which we have quoted above, is an apposite example, the excess of wit, and this of indeed the highest order, but it is concealed by its essential combination with the graphic portraiture of fancy, and the profound or sagacious applications of argument and statement. The fact, the reason, and the exposition—the substance of paragraphs of ordinary language—come

\* Speech on American taxation.

together in the trope or the comparison as clearly and fully as if a page were expended upon them.

Mrs Burke, with his son and one of his brothers at this time accompanied him to Ireland. Among many places which they visited was the small estate, which, but a little before, had devolved to him on the death of his brother Garrett, who died in 1765.

He returned to London in the end of the year (1766). The marquis of Rockingham, anxious for his advancement, strongly urged his taking office under Pitt. The office of a lord of trade was offered; but Mr Burke, who, as the reader is aware, clearly saw the true character of the motley administration then in the course of formation, refused and firmly resolved to adhere to his own party. He consequently took his course in the house, and soon appeared as the leader of the most powerful section of the opposition. For some time there was indeed little occasion for effort, as the Chatham administration was falling to pieces under its own ill-cemented weight. The following notices mark the course of Mr Burke's continued ascent to reputation:—"Our friend E. B. has acted all along with so unwearied a worthiness, that the world does him the justice to believe that, in his public conduct, he has no one view but the public good."\*

Lord Charlemont, in one of his visits to London, writes to Mr Flood, 1767, "I some time ago sent to Leland an account of our friend Burke's unparalleled success, which I suppose he communicated to you. His character daily rises, and Barré's is totally eclipsed by him; his praise is universal, and even the opposition, who own his superior talents, can find nothing to say against him but that he is an impudent fellow." Mr Prior is led into some judicious observations in his comment on this phrase, which, though playfully used by lord Charlemont, is yet pregnant with observation. A strong prejudice, arising out of the constitutional idiosyncrasy of the country, then tended to exclude from the leading rank of public men those who were not upheld by parliamentary influence, and high or weighty connexion. Mr Burke was—[as Mr Prior observes]—the first who, without any such pretensions, rose by the sheer force of his qualifications. Without the circle in which the *eclat* of these powers was seen and felt, the public mind was not altogether prepared for the portent of an unknown and unconnected borough member starting at once into the place appropriated to the representatives of great cities and counties, or the descendants of the highest aristocracy. We shall quote Mr Prior for the rest. "This success, on considering his extraordinary capacity and acquirements, was not, however, so inexplicable as it seemed. Scarcely any one, perhaps none, who ever entered the house of commons, had laboured so diligently to qualify himself for the duties of the office he was to fulfil, or united with diligence so much genius and power, to profit by his labours. His general knowledge was various, and of such ready application, that, in argument or in application, his resources appeared boundless. He had carefully studied the ancients, and stored up what they knew; from the moderns he had drawn improved principles of law, morals, politics, and science. To

\* Letter from W. Burke.



these he could add, when he thought proper, the logic and metaphysics of the schools with the more popular acquirements of poetry, history, criticism. In powers of imagination no orator of any age has approached him—in prompt command of words, and in vigour of language, very few—in felicity, and, when he pleased, elegance of diction when he seized the pen, no writer of modern times.”

On the dissolution of parliament in 1768, he came in again for Wendover. At this time he purchased Gregories, a small property near Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire, for £20,000, which he had in part raised by the sale of his Irish estate, the remainder by money raised on mortgage, but advanced by the marquis of Rockingham. A part of the sum has been said to have been advanced by Mr William Burke; but Mr Prior, to whom this information was given, appears to consider it doubtful. The cost of this purchase was increased by the condition of being compelled by the vender to purchase also the pictures and marbles. In one of his letters written at the time to Barry, he mentions, “as to this house, it is hung from top to bottom with pictures.” He spent the recess of parliament in the repairs and arrangements essential to the occupation of this house, and showed the same skill and activity in his farming occupations as in his more studious and important pursuits.

His means being now improved, he fulfilled his pledge to Barry, whom he had a few years before brought over from Dublin, by sending him to study in Italy. In this act of generous friendship he was aided, to some extent, by the marquis of Rockingham, as well as by his brother. The circumstance was afterwards laid hold of for the purpose of detraction, and it was suggested that there was no great generosity in being munificent at the expense of others. It would be a waste of space to expose such frivolous malice. Mr Burke gave all he could afford, and pretended to no praise. Few would have given as much under his circumstances, and fewer still performed for another, the far more difficult task of soliciting.

About this time the letters of Junius excited a great sensation in the public mind, and still more in the political circles. They were very generally attributed to Mr Burke, who disclaimed them, but admitted that he knew the author. We only mention this because it is a strong test of the general opinion which then prevailed as to his powers. The difference of style between Junius and anything we know of Mr Burke's writings is very great, but it has justly been observed, this offers no very strong objection. To us, however, there is a difference of another kind not so easily stated,—we mean a difference in the moral tone and spirit. This is perhaps the less easy to feel, as there is also some similarity too. There is a strong tone of animosity, often approaching the ebullition of vindictiveness in the later speeches of Mr Burke; but, setting apart the difference of period thus suggested, there is as much distinction between the keen and cold gall which distils incessantly from the pen of Junius and the towering denunciations of Burke, as there is between the solemn and high roll of the passing thunder-storm and the keen chill flash of perpetual congelation. A lofty humanity pervades and consecrates the resentment of Mr Burke; and even when he declares the disruption of his

dearest friendships for the sake of his principles, there is the most touching outbreak of the kindest feelings of his nature, so that he seems more to wound himself than the objects of his indignation.

We should here drop the subject but that we think every reader will be gratified by the notice on the subject of Junius, which occurs in Mr Burke's speech on *ex officio* information in 1770. He replies to the attorney-general, and his object is to throw the blame of inefficient laws on the administration. He points severely at their impotent persecution of Wilkes, and asks how it is that the formidable Junius is untouched. "Where shall we look for this relaxation of laws, and of all government? How comes this Junius to have broke through the cobwebs of the law, and to range uncontrolled, unpunished, through the land? The myrmidons of the court have been long, and are still, pursuing him in vain. They will not spend their time on me, or you, or you. No; they disdain such vermin when the mighty boar of the forest that has broke through all their toils is before them. But what will all their efforts avail? No sooner has he wounded one, than he lays another dead at his feet. For my part, when I saw his attack on the king, *I own my blood ran cold*. I thought he had ventured too far, and that there was an end of his triumphs. Not that he had not asserted many truths; yes, Sir, there are in that composition many bold truths by which a wise prince might profit. *It was the rancour and venom with which I was struck*. In these respects, the *North Briton*\* is as much inferior to him as in *strength, wit, and judgment*. But when I expected from this daring flight his final ruin and fall, behold him rising still higher, and coming down souse upon both houses of parliament. Yes, he did make you his quarry, and you still bleed from the wounds of his talons; you crouched, and still crouch beneath his rage. Nor has he dreaded the terrors of your brow, Sir—he has attacked even you, Sir—he has—and I believe you have no reason to triumph in the encounter. In short, after carrying away our royal eagle in his pounces, and dashing him against a rock, he has laid you prostrate. King, lords, and commons are but the sport of his fury. Were he a member of this house, what might not be expected from his knowledge, his firmness, and his integrity? How easily would he be known by his contempt of danger, by his penetration, by his vigour. Nothing could escape his vigilance and his activity. Bad ministers could conceal nothing from his sagacity, nor could promises and threats induce him to conceal anything from the public."†

As this memoir must be contracted within limits, far within the scope which the real importance of Mr Burke's life may seem to demand, we cannot afford to enter upon the detail of numerous public questions which afforded the occasion for his exertions in parliament. Those greater events in which his character as a statesman have been most involved, are, fortunately, the events also of most abiding interest to succeeding times, even to our own. With reference to these great questions, the revolutionary changes of his age—changes still not ended—his personal conduct has been largely the theme of praise and censure. Their history affects our more immediate task of concluding

\* Wilkes's paper.

† Debates.



the account of Ireland and Irishmen as strongly, as it must enter as an essential feature of English history. We have therefore entered on this portion of our task with a view to a full commentary on Mr Burke's conduct in these leading events, which are equally important to his character, and the conclusion at which it is our aim to arrive.

Generally, his place for many years at this period of his life was that of virtual leader of the opposition. His exertions were constant and strenuous on all questions affecting the rights of the subject. In his conduct there was a moderation which plainly proved that he was mainly governed by a just sense of constitutional principle, and not by the requisition of party. We hold it unnecessary to go into the mere enumeration of public questions on which he spoke. It will be enough to observe that, in the parliamentary debates, his speeches are marked by special praise from the reporters.

In 1770, Mr Burke published his celebrated treatise on the causes of the present discontents. As a literary composition, and as a display of profound and comprehensive knowledge, it has been thought deserving to hold rank among the best productions of his pen. There is perhaps no small deduction to be made from this estimate, by those who regard it as a piece of dexterous advocacy, a party paper remarkably adapted to the temper and prejudices of the day. But the advocate is not of necessity insincere, and the consideration is so far valuable, as it involves that of Mr Burke's adherence to principle, and leads us to fix some points of no great difficulty in themselves, but incidentally perplexed by the prejudices and prepossessions of his friends and enemies. No statesman has ever been to the same extent the object of both, or suffered more from their respective errors. The admirers of Mr Burke have insensibly placed themselves in the condition of having to explain away numerous inconsistencies; and his enemies, finding it easy to reject such defences, have put false values and fallacious constructions on such passages in his life, and actions. Mr Burke's mastery of a more extensive range of political knowledge, his power of deep generalizations and capacious views, was the fruit of rare genius and uncommon applications; but the mature wisdom which can direct the judgment is from its very nature the result of experience. A great genius, instead of being inevitably right in its exercise, is most likely to be urged by impulsive tendencies which demand a double portion of prudence and of old experience to direct the use of his faculties. The wider scope—the more numerous and varied ranges offer a broader and more intricate scope for the errors of invention. Mr Hamilton observed that whatever Mr Burke espoused, soon appeared to him invested with the characters of the greatest wisdom; and though invidiously said, the observation is in character. Mr Hamilton might with truth have added—that the person or the measure supported by Mr Burke, must, however qualified, have had no mean recommendations to a mind of the noblest moral and intellectual gifts. But the proposition is illustrated by much of the early political career of Mr Burke. His first introduction to life was under a nobleman, whose temper and understanding were peculiarly framed to win and fix the affections of his mind. The impression was confirmed by his mature experience; “and I did



see in that noble person such sound principles, such an enlargement of mind, such clear and sagacious sense, and such unshaken fortitude, as have bound me, as well as others much better than me, to him, from that time forward."\* We have already intimated our dissent from those who had either treated with hasty slight, or too readily assented to unjust animadversions against the brief administration of that nobleman. It is however with a very different judgment that we look to the matter of his tract—and the general position from which he assails the adversaries of his party; yet even still it must be allowed that he presents an admirably just view of the facts on which he draws his inferences. The numerous sections of party, the intrigues, the petty grounds of difference, the political or personal hostilities which actuated most of the leading men of every side—together with the great emergency of affairs—threw the court on its own resources. In a season of unusual embarrassments accumulating at home and abroad—the successive administrations chased each other down like the clouds of a tempestuous morning; a morning loaded with the elements of fast gathering ruin and confusion; the American war; the revolution of France; the still wider, but less visible revolutions of opinion and of the social state, which were to be causes and consequences of these great events. To some extent misled by a preconceived inference, the elective affinity of purpose—but with the wide scope of reason which characterizes all his works—Mr Burke, in his pamphlet, traces the rise of the aristocracy to political influence: with equal precision he sketches out their decline, with its main causes and results. Of these many, we would say most, are justly assigned, but Mr Burke has, we think, failed to make the necessary allowance for certain processes, through which the natural laws of the social state were undergoing alteration. In England as in America and in France, the numbers, wealth and intelligence of the inferior and middle orders of society had prodigiously advanced; and new proportions had long been taking place in the distribution of the elements of civil influence. The operation of a new state of things was retarded by the ordinary effect of social institutions; but the moving incidents alone were wanting, to give impulse to the workings that no human hand could stay or alter, till they had run the destined round.

The world was teeming with new emergencies, and new mind was called forth and infused into the popular mass. It showed itself without being recognised both in America and England. In the latter country a great rush of movement tended to the head; the people became more effectively influential in state concerns; and a considerable mass of new activity and talent began to force its way to power. With this arose the occasion, the wars and national controversies which demanded and sanctioned the rise of new men—embarrassments on a more spacious scale, and less to be dealt with either by mere force or according to old methods, surcharged the torrent of intellectual activity, and threw into comparative disuse, the authority of elder schools. The genius of Chatham was an incident which coincided in effect with these wider forces. His proud and solitary spirit, aiming at

\* Speech on American Taxation, 1774.

despotic authority, completely disorganized a system already falling into ruin, and gave decision to the slower hand of time. The personal character of George III. was another; with a mind conscientious, informed, and possessed of far more than the average ability of statesmen, he saw the approaching changes and emergencies, as they were seen by his age. He saw the prerogatives which it was his duty to defend; the empire of Great Britain which it was his duty to preserve; menaced and made the sport of contending factions. He did not enter upon the field of future times now become familiar to the vulgar, nor did he reason on general principles by which his actions are now tried; but, feeling the emergencies in which he was placed, and observing the reckless game of factions trifling with the most momentous concerns and fighting their miserable fight, while the ground was rocking under their feet, he strove to stem the tide of troubles by his own firmness. The varied party movements, so admirably described by Mr Burke, were the essential consequence of such a state of things. The following description taken from Mr Burke's tract will serve admirably for a sketch of the moment when it appeared. "Nobody, I believe, will consider it merely as the language of spleen or disappointment, if I say that there is something particularly alarming in the present conjuncture. There is hardly a man, in or out of power who holds any other language. That government is at once dreaded and contemned; that the laws are despoiled of all their respected and salutary terrors; that their inaction is a subject of ridicule, and their exertion of abhorrence; that rank, office, and title, and all the solemn plausibilities of the world have lost their reverence and effect; that our foreign politics are as much deranged as our domestic economy, that our dependancies are slackened in their affection and loosed from their obedience; that we know neither how to yield, nor how to enforce; that hardly anything above or below, abroad or at home, is sound and entire; but that disconnexion and confusion, in offices, in parties, in families, in parliament, in the nation, prevail beyond the disorders of any former time; these are facts, universally admitted and lamented." Such is, we believe, an important page of history from the ablest observer of the time which it describes. It was the beginning of troubles which could not be foreseen by mortal eye. The theory which referred these evils to a court project to secure to the court the despotic use of its own influence, by getting rid of the subordinate authority of great natural interest such as that of the peerage, or great acquired consideration like that of Mr Burke, may be set down among those errors which cannot be avoided; it was suggested by a uniform system of appearances, explicable by such an assumption, and not inconsistent with the ordinary laws and processes of society; it was an error only as regarded the private designs of the human heart, but not as to facts and consequences; an equivalent system of facts was in operation; the court acted from the blind impulse of successive emergencies as it was assumed to act by design; the consequences could not be very different. Mr Burke's essay may with this proviso be read as formally representing the actual court measures for a time pursued; though pursued from necessity and not from any preconceived and refined system of policy.

Such was the condition of England at the dawn of the greatest, and perhaps the last, revolution from the disruption of the Roman empire to the year in which we now write. It was the commencement of the great period of transition of which we have already endeavoured to give a summary view.\* It had been long in preparation, as it was the combined result of the progress of society. It wanted but the impelling impulses, and they came from the administrative disorganization and the popular disorder of England.

It now becomes essential to the main purpose of this memoir to enter on a more connected statement of the earliest proceedings connected with the American war, which may be considered as the chief material of one great period of Mr Burke's history, and as containing the proper rectification of those errors which either malicious calumny or ignorance have propagated concerning his character. The same details are equally required to bear out and vindicate the views chiefly maintained in these volumes. The necessary matter shall be reduced within the narrowest possible compass.

The American colonies had, from their earliest settlement, grown up rapidly in population and commercial importance. They were bound to England by commercial advantages and the sense of protection; but had perhaps at no time thrown off the spirit of independence which was coeval with their origin. They had been first driven out of their native land, either by persecution, or led by a wild independence of spirit in no small degree tinged with fanaticism. Their growth was prosperous; for they had carried with them the knowledge and arts of civilization, and they were let alone by the parent country; they were left free from exactions, because there was nothing to exact; and the supremacy of the British crown was exercised for their advantage. The kings of England had hitherto seen in them a future empire to add to the commerce and power of Britain. They contributed no more than what appeared to be an adequate compensation for the cost of the protection, and for the benefits of trade; this was paid in the least intrusive and least derogatory form in the shape of port duties, while their internal government and taxation were left to themselves, and solely employed for the conduct of their internal government. But in the mean time, the sense of independence, instead of diminishing, was growing with their growth; and among the more educated classes, there was a common feeling that they were at no remote period to assume the position of a great commercial power.

Antecedent to the period in which we are now engaged, incidents took place which must be regarded as introductory. By the treaties in 1762, between Great Britain on one part, and France and Spain on the other, the effective strength and concert of the American states were greatly augmented by the cession to England of the Floridas, and of vast territories bounding on the Mississippi. Thus, besides the gain of territory, the colonies would evidently have to deal with England alone. With this gain of force, causes of complaint arose. In compliance with the Spanish court, a very considerable branch of the American trade was cut off by restrictions on the contraband trade which they car-

\* Introduction to the period.



ried on with the Spanish West Indian islands. This had long been a subject of bitter complaint to Spain, and its prevention was now not less so to the colonies. Their resentment was increased by the arbitrary and unskilful method of execution: it was committed to the naval and military authorities, who, as might be anticipated, carried matters with a rough, high-handed, and peremptory precision; and without any regard to the ordinary courses and concessions of a duty which they did not understand. It was thus a double blow to America: its trade cut off, and its freedom roughly invaded. The North Americans at the time, not arrived at any height of productive power, had maintained themselves chiefly as carriers between England and other countries, of which the Spanish settlements, abundant in the precious metals, supplied the principal part. Thus they obtained goods in England, and were enabled to pay by money from the West Indies. In 1764, the pressure of heavy financial embarrassments, and the complaints of the country, led Mr George Grenville to turn his thoughts to America as a source of revenue. He proposed resolutions imposing duties on all foreign articles of trade imported by Americans: a bill, carrying them into effect, was immediately brought in. The consequence of such a measure threatened the entire destruction of the American trade,—a hardship, because they were not allowed to obtain those articles of trade, except from England. Another consequence was, much internal inconvenience and distress, as the Americans were dependent on England for several articles of home consumption, which, with a heavy balance of trade against them, they could neither obtain nor well afford. General irritation was the result. The sense of separate interests was thus forcibly raised and widely diffused.

It was while affairs were in this critical position, when the cup of grievances was surcharged, and the fatal drop was but wanting to its overflow, that the Stamp Act was first introduced by Mr Grenville in 1764. The Americans had barely submitted to the new port duties; they appeared but as a lawful measure carried to extreme. They were sanctioned by usage, and might probably be mitigated, when their complaints were heard. But they had been attended with one novel feature, which had sharpened the grievance, and roused into life, though it did not call into action, a strong temper of resistance. This was the explicit declaration that the new port duties were for the purpose of raising a revenue. It was still but a new name for an old thing: but the stroke was followed up in the Stamp Act, which imposed duties on nearly every article of the internal commerce of the colonies. Immediate resistance of the most violent kind must appear to have followed as a matter of course. At once the trade of the provinces was arrested, and all the ordinary circulation of civil life was congealed: The sail hung idle in the wharf—the courts of law, and the marts of trade were deserted and desolate, and no ordinary process of social life interrupted the fermentation of the popular mind. In the mean time the effects were felt with equal severity by the English mercantile interests. The principal part of their trade was then with America, and this was at an end. In America an agreement was settled against all further imports from England. In England also, the stock lay idle in the stores, and the workmen were turned out of employ-

ment. Petitions to parliament from all the chief trading towns, London, Liverpool, Bristol, &c., attested strongly the mischief. The sum of these unfortunate circumstances could not fail to receive immediate attention. At this time, the marquis of Rockingham came into power. An inquiry was immediately set on foot, and the obnoxious act repealed. The fact we have already stated—we have now to make a few remarks on the manner, which we postponed, to avoid the interruption of our personal narrative.

Many of Mr Burke's biographers appear to have gone too far in asserting or admitting the impolicy of the declaratory act. The step has been judged of with reference to after events, not in any way connected with it. The repeated discussion of the same grievance caused a considerable extension of the complaints of America: abstract questions seldom affect the public mind till they are in some way invested with practical application; they are then mostly dangerous, because they are not understood, and liable to be carried beyond their due limits. To admit that a right, supposed to be involved in sovereignty, should be set aside by a very simple implication, would seem to lead to far more dangerous questions. The assertion of it was a barrier to authority: the policy of Mr Burke's advice consisted in this, that it went to the precise length of the evil, and conceded no further than was required. The remaining question of right, however it might be decided, was one not to be rashly settled. It is unwise in such contentions, to attempt defining too precisely the line of rights: it is enough to avoid injustice, and leave the question till it practically arises. The simple repeal of the obnoxious measure was amply sufficient for the occasion: America was more than content; we extract the following sentences from the chronicle of the year:—"The rejoicings all over North America for the repeal of the stamp act, have been excessive, and several of the colonies have begun to raise subscriptions for statues to Mr Pitt. At Philadelphia, they came to the following healing resolution, viz., that, to demonstrate our zeal to Great Britain, and our gratitude for the repeal of the stamp act, each of us will, on the 4th of June next, being the birth-day of our most gracious sovereign, George III., dress ourselves in a new suit of the manufactures of England, and give what home-spun we have to the poor." Rejoicings were general through the provinces; and it is incidentally stated in one of the chronicles for the same year, that a melancholy accident occurred at Hartford, in Connecticut, from the explosion of three barrels of gunpowder, which had been provided for fireworks for the occasion. But when once a contest happens between the people and their sovereign, there is in point of fact, no limit to questions of right, till force has decided what reason is impotent to determine. There is far too much to be said on every side, for self-interest to want a specious plea: nor were the Americans more earnest in the complaints which were redressed, than the people of England in resenting that redress. In the commencement of 1767, a general sense seemed to combine all parties in a disposition adverse to the Americans. Mr Grenville proposed to raise a revenue upon them to the amount of £400,000; and Mr Townsend, who was chancellor of the exchequer, agreed in the principle, but hesitated as to the time. The Americans were already aware of the



general feeling in England, and of the design of the principal members of the administration, and did not fail to display, on their part, a strong determination to resist. It was generally known that resistance was in preparation: a few voices were raised to forewarn, but they made no impression; and, in the course of the session, a bill was passed, imposing duties upon a variety of important articles on their importation into America. Another bill was passed, placing all imposts and duties in the colonies under the control of his majesty's commissioners. To this was added a bill, prohibiting the governor, council, and assembly of New York from any act of legislation, until certain securities were given, and certain acts of submission performed.

All this time, lord Chatham, who was ostensibly at the head of the government, continued in his mysterious retirement, and took no actual part in public affairs. The cabinet became embarrassed, and at last the king was driven to an effort to organize an efficient ministry. Proposals were made to the marquis of Rockingham: after some negotiation he declared off on the question of America, and the rejection of general Conway, who, with him, entertained a pacific policy. Townsend died suddenly, and in the perplexity of the moment, Chatham was applied to once more, but he would listen to no terms. At last, after much complicated negotiation, the ministry was pieced together again, lord North was persuaded to take office as chancellor of the exchequer, and other changes of no importance to our narrative followed.

Meanwhile, the effect of the recent enactments was not slow to show itself in America. In January, 1769, a spirited discussion took place on the subject: it was followed by several others, in which the question seems to have been argued strongly by several members of the opposition. A petition from New York denied the power of parliament to tax America: a resolution was carried against receiving it. A motion was made by governor Pownall, for the repeal of the obnoxious acts, but ministers continued to stave it off. The oppressive operation of the mutiny act—the arrival of the board of commissioners in Boston—the wording of Townsend's act, containing provision for further aggression—all called forth a prompt and unanimous declaration from the colonists. A party of leading citizens met to concert the most expedient means of giving effect to the agreement against the importation of English commodities. An active and exceedingly effective war of tracts and pamphlets commenced. On the 15th February, 1768, the assembly of Massachusetts sent out a circular to the colonies, inviting a combined resistance—other assemblies pursued the same course. The British government demanded the retraction of these resolutions from the assembly of Massachusetts—they returned a pointed refusal, and were dissolved by governor Bernard.

A cargo of madeira was, we believe, the first occasion of a recourse to physical resistance: the vessel was attacked by the rabble, and after a serious scuffle between them and the revenue officers, the latter, together with the sloop, were barely saved by the crew of a British frigate which lay in the harbour. The people of the town proceeded with singular dexterity, and a show of justice was kept up by the most adroit collusions.



At home, the government had come to the determination to resort to force. In consequence, accounts were soon received in Boston that a regiment, a frigate, with other armed vessels, were on their approach to support the government. The only effect was a determination, followed by immediate preparations, to resist force by force. A strong force, both naval and military, soon crowded round them, and a sullen silence was imposed for a time. But nothing was thus gained; all the colonies took fire, and adopted a haughtier tone, and more decided measures.

The ministry began to feel that something must be retracted; and a circular was transmitted, offering to take off the obnoxious duties. But the storm was now too high for compromise; the pretence of right was not disclaimed; the true intent and reserved purpose of its being maintained was either fully known, or strongly suspected, and the duty on tea, insignificant in itself, remained as the tangible ground for resistance. We are thus brought up to 1770, when it may be considered that all parties to this great question had definitively taken their ground in the contest. Before we proceed further, therefore, with Mr Burke's history, we shall offer a few remarks to fix the character of the principles on which his conduct ought to be fairly judged. He has been accused of inconsistency for espousing the quarrel of America, and taking part against the French Revolution. It is one of the main objects of this memoir to discuss such charges. With this object in view, we shall here state the elementary grounds on which the conduct of Mr Burke is to be justified in either case as they shall occur; and, first, as relates to America.

The distinction between the two cases will, indeed, need no refinement. America resisted an *external* government imposing a new constitution. In France an insurrection of certain classes levied war against the kingdom. We shall have a further opportunity for pursuing this comparison at large, and shall here only delay to point out some prominent peculiarities of the question, with respect to the colonist, with a view to show that it does not involve the principles of that allegiance which every one must be considered to owe to the government of his country; neither involving the self-preserving expediency of the social state, which makes the maintenance of subordination essential to the existence of social order in a country, nor the external necessities of circumstance by which one country may be in a manner vitally connected with another; nor, finally, the strong, though not so essential or elementary principle, of prescriptive authority. Of these first principles of civil allegiance, not one will be found to have applied to America. The power exercised by Great Britain was originated during the weakness of the colonies,—had for its professed object their protection, and was maintained by prescription; but the understanding on all sides was governed by these same considerations, and there was an established method and rule in the exercise of those powers. The powers now claimed were wholly different in principle: they were despotic, and violated the very foundation of civil allegiance. The first principle of lawful obedience is this,—that all lawful government is exclusively for the good of the people governed: opposed to this is the subjection of weakness to force. In the first

case, the duties of king and people are, so far as they are clearly ascertained, reciprocal; in the second, they are not binding further than the disparity of force imposes. There is no law for slavery but the old adage, "might makes right." So far as authority can be considered of any value on such purely elementary questions, we may briefly state that the best historians and jurists of ancient and modern times agree in the opinion, that the colonist, if governed by the parent country, has a strict parity of right; he is to be governed *pari jure*, and entitled in common interest to a community of privilege. *Si quid autem commune fuerit, id aut communiter administrandum, aut pro ratas portionibus dividendum.\**

A few facts and circumstances will show the application of these statements to America. The colonists, from the beginning, had been allowed to exercise a full discretion in the management of their own internal affairs; the government of England had been simply paternal; and, by universal understanding, for the advantage of the colonies. The advantages were understood to be reciprocal—the legitimate principle of all colonial empire. The Americans were protected by the naval power of England, and enriched by being the principal carriers in her trade; England, on her part, enjoyed a vast monopoly of the colonial markets. Here was the whole relation in all its bearings. There existed no right to extend it; the colonies were not in any way a member or members of the British nation; they were not represented in England. As colonies deriving protection from the naval power, and capital from the commercial wealth of England, a certain subjection based on these grounds, and a revenue arising from the very nature of the connexion, was the equitable return. These impositions were early established, and might be claimed from prescription, while the same prescription confirmed the immunity of the colonies from the interposition of new and inconsistent exactions. The navigation act had the authority of time. The new imposts were arbitrary, and amounted to the assertion of despotic power.

But it is surprising to witness the fast hold of old national prejudices. The question as to the precise right by which the jurisdiction of a country over her colonies can be maintained, after it has ceased to be beneficial to the latter, and can be thrown off, does not appear to have been discussed. The maxim that might makes right, has, we must admit, a formidable place in the equity of international law; but, still, this equity is in itself clear enough; a subjection imposed by force alone, is only such till it can be thrown off. In the *internal* government of nations, the will of the nation is involved—the power of the ruler is neither more nor less than the power of the nation itself—and this is the fundamental principle of government. The idea of parentage was impressed on the English mind: it was strengthened by the indefinite notion of subjection. Of the first, which, at the time, afforded strong rhetorical appeals, we need dwell no longer than to mention Mr Burke's retort to lord Carmarthen, who said in his speech, "The Americans are our children, and how can they revolt against their parent?" Mr Burke, in reply, said, "They are our children,

\* Grotius de Jure, lib. 2, ch. 9, § 10.

but when children ask for bread, we are not to give a stone." To say that the Americans were subjects of the crown was true in one sense, and understood in another; there was a lurking sophism in the public understanding. Their remote ancestors had been subjects in the strongest sense, as natives of Great Britain; but to such a subjection there is the same natural law of limitation which divides all the races of the human family. In this sense the assumption is absurd, and this was the popular sense. The Americans were actually bound by a conventional subjection to a certain settled form of government, and the question must be what this was, and what it implied. The question is of some importance in the life of Mr Burke; and it is therefore we call the attention of our readers to its brief consideration. The government of a kingdom is universally understood to be either for the benefit of the people, or a state of slavery for the benefit of a master or dominant nation. The latter case may be dismissed with the remark, that, not being voluntary, it essentially involves the right of resistance. The first, which applies to America, is easily reduced to its principle; the right of resistance must commence at farthest when the interests of the people are *avowedly* disregarded by their government. In numerous cases the fact may be difficult to ascertain; but in the case of America, there was no such difficulty: the wrong was ostensible; it was distinctly avowed; there was no latent evasion. It was proposed to raise an American revenue, not for the benefit of America, but for England. America was to be governed *for* England: this was the principle broadly put forth, and was the real ground of national complaint. Now, our main object in these remarks is to call the reader of this memoir to observe, that this can be compared with no ordinary case of the rebellion of a country against its own constituted authorities. It was the legitimate reclamation of its external government to the proper duty of every government; it was not the common case of a populace pretending to control the authority of the laws and constitutions of the land, but the case of a people who insisted on the common and indefeasible duty of their government. But to constitute the case of the French revolution there must be a simple question between the people and their government: for this there should have been a community of rights, privileges, laws, administration and interests, between England and America: they should have been members of the same empire, and alike represented in the British parliament; and this, after all, would be only a rude approximation to the common analogy of the question between a nation and its government. But the cases may be thus definitely put—France revolted against her own constitution; America against external usurpation. A question, however, of a different kind was actually to be settled; not as in the days of James II., at what point the dereliction of the duties of a sovereign might determine the allegiance of the subject; but at what point of its progress a great country might claim a government for itself. That some such point exists, must at once be conceded; as the progress may approach and arrive at equality, or the dependent state may become superior without any supposed opposition of interests. This precise period in the scale of progress must be decided, like all human changes, by events; and the event of competent power is



enough in the universal understanding of nations. A clear infringement of the fundamental principle of government is more than our case requires: the government of England in America had been settled, like all just government, by usage—in departing from this, the question arose as to the *authority*. A new right was claimed; and it was of the nature of despotism, arbitrary and unlimited. We do not enter—for it is unnecessary—into the special injustice proposed: it is easy to see the growing consequences of such a precedent as was thus introduced. He must have been a dull American whose fears took no alarm at finding the hand of England at his purse strings. It was plain that the moment had arrived, when one government was inadequate to two nations with opposing interests and demands; with the broad Atlantic rolling between them, and each fully requiring all the authority and deliberative weight of an entire administration.

We trust that we have said enough to convey a clear sense of the grounds of Mr Burke's conduct—what he did, and where he stopped. The habit of looking to party principles has led his opponents into error. Allowing for the actual changes of the controversy in which the colonies and the parent country were then committed, he will be seen to have kept steadily adherent to the principles of justice and sound policy; and, if his conduct appeared inconsistent, it was because his revilers and calumniators confounded the simplest distinctions.

The next year renewed a contest, which the good sense and firmness of Mr Burke's party had set at rest. The declaratory act simply arrested a dangerous question: the conduct of succeeding administrations, adopting explicitly a principle which it was the policy of the Rockingham party to suppress, and absurdly acting for no other immediate end than the establishment of a right which could not be admitted, adopted the absurd project of a taxation not more than merely nominal—a challenge to try a power. This policy implied so much that was dangerous in design, and so fully suggested all the most objectionable consequences, that it could not fail to elicit resistance. Against this Mr Burke took his determined stand. As the strife proceeded, his own judgment was also maturing by experience: it was not consistent with his principles, or with sound discretion, to anticipate the final event of the struggle; but at every step he adhered to justice.

The contest with the colonies proceeded for many years, during which Mr Burke took a conspicuous and leading part in behalf of the Americans. In 1771, his efforts, and the high character he had acquired for knowledge of American affairs, obtained for him the appointment of agent for New York. This appointment was worth £700 a-year.

Meanwhile, his activity in the house, as leader of the opposition, was maintained by frequent exertions of eloquence on a variety of questions of home politics: on these the briefest enunciations will, for the most part, be enough.

The reports of his speeches during this session are too slight and insufficient to give more than some imperfect view of the general line of argument. We have already had incidental occasion to quote him on the discussion of the power of filing *ex officio* informations by the attorney-general. He exerted himself with great vigour in behalf of

two bills for ascertaining the rights of electors, in February, 1771. In March, a bill framed by himself, on the powers of juries in libel prosecutions, was brought forward by Mr Dowdeswell: it is remarkable as an anticipation of the doctrine afterwards decidedly laid down, settling that the jury are judges of the law as well as of the fact. His speech, on this occasion, may be found both in the parliamentary history of England, and in his works, from which it has been copied by the compiler of the former. Mr Dowdeswell's motion was rejected by a large majority, on the grounds that the declaration it proposed was actually the law, and that it might only have the effect of unsettling the authority on which it thus stood. A few days after there was a report in the *Public Advertiser* of Mr Burke's speech: the reporter had in effect fallen into the very error of misunderstanding the argument so far, as to put into Mr Burke's mouth the fallacy anticipated by the opponents of the motion. This drew a long letter from him, distinctly stating his view, and explicitly declaring that "Mr Dowdeswell did not bring in an enacting bill to *give* to juries, as the account expresses it, a *power* to try law and fact in matters of libel;" but "that they shall be *held* competent in right and law to try the whole matter laid in the information. The bill is directing to the judges concerning the opinion in law which they are known to hold on the subject." The fact was, that there was an uncertainty created by the effort of the judges to restrain the power of juries, and extend that of the bench. There was a difference of opinion, and in consequence much doubt. Such a consequence appears to be the proper object of a declaratory enactment. A bill to the same effect, and copied from Mr Burke, was brought in by Mr Fox at a subsequent period.

Among other discussions at this period, there appears to have been much irritation on the score of its privileges this year manifested by the house. The debates of 1771 are filled with angry debates on matters now of slight interest. One of these, nevertheless, had an important and permanent result—the liberty of publishing the debates.

Many members having from time to time complained of unfair reports of their speeches in the public journals of the day, at last, in February, 1771, colonel Onslow made a complaint of several journals, and moved that the printers should be brought to justice for infringing a standing order of the house, against printing, in newspapers, the transactions of the house of commons. The affirmative was carried—the printers were ordered to appear. Some complied; others refused. The sergeant-at-arms was ordered to arrest the refractory printers. This failed; and, in the mean time, several more delinquencies of the same nature were similarly brought forward by Mr Onslow. A long series of motions, through the month of March, to the same purport, with various results, continued to excite the house, and irritate the public mind; until some of the persons arrested, acting, doubtless, on advice, adopted a course of defence. When taken into custody by the messenger of the house, the person so arrested instantly sent for a city constable, to whom he gave the messenger in charge. To detain his prisoner, the messenger adopted the same expedient. Both were brought before the sitting magistrate, who immediately dismissed the printer, as not being in the custody of a legal officer. The consequence was

serious, as might be anticipated; for the contest was thus transferred from the printers to the city of London. The passions of the people were roused into a fearful agitation. The question, from a trifle, became one of the deepest moment: it was, whether the liberty of the subject, or the constitution of parliament, was to be subverted. The lord-mayor was ordered to attend. He came, escorted by a furious mob; and returned, drawn by their hands. The proceedings went on for several days, and terminated in sending alderman Oliver and the lord-mayor to the Tower. Mr Burke's speech was ill heard, and not reported; but the debates, from which we have collected these particulars, mention that he lamented the miserable conduct of the house, in which hardly any prudent course had been left them, but that they had chosen the most imprudent in their power. Having thus spoken, he withdrew, with many of his friends. He soon after, in company with the marquis of Rockingham, and the dukes of Portland and Manchester, went to visit alderman Oliver in the Tower.

In our own time, when great movements of a revolutionary character have precipitated the feelings of parties towards each extreme, there is some difficulty in justly appreciating the wisdom of moderation. They whose views of that reform—which must be ever required by the progress of mankind, and by the imperfection of all human things—are derived from just views of political theory, must act and think on a system, at the same time conservative, and tending to reform: far between the bigotry of prejudice which clings to mere antiquity, and the headlong thirst for mere change. Such is the proper station which is to be assigned to Mr Burke; and he is only to be truly estimated by fully keeping it in view. He was perhaps, even at this still early period of his career, slowly beginning to apprehend that he was standing in the dawn of a revolution; he certainly was impressed with the danger of many of those workings, both abroad and at home, and of those imperfections in the government of the country which were its primary causes. Without fully measuring the remoter effects, he clearly saw the evil tendencies. Hence it was that he has been found at different times so earnestly striving against corruption and mal-administration; and not less against ill-judged popular measures, of which the tendency would have been to alter the due balance between government and the people. It was as much a part of his policy to repress the undue encroachments of one, as the brute and inconsiderate interferences of the other: he was on the one hand as little to be confused with the demagogue, as on the other with the partisan of courts.

In the year 1771, alderman Sawbridge introduced a motion for triennial parliaments. Mr Burke and his party opposed it effectively. An outline of Mr Burke's speech on the occasion will be found in his works. The topics are obvious; for the subject has since grown trite. We only feel here called on to observe, in reference to the time, that it was one of the many strong indications of the temper which was setting in. The complaints against power; the endeavour to shake off burthens and arbitrary restraints and impositions, would naturally enough be the commencement of the rise and flow of democracy. The proposed measure would, at best, have been a hundred years in advance;



and, looking at it in connexion with the history of the following twenty years, it could scarcely have been less than the overthrow of the British constitution, as it would have altogether shattered into ruin the central adjusting and controlling weight of parliament, and reduced the house of commons into a mere arena for a fatal struggle between the rabble and the peerage or court. To exalt the power of parliament; to depress the influence of the court; to restrain the power, and extend and guard the rights and constitutional liberties of the people;—these were the immediate objects kept in view by Mr Burke and the Rockingham section of opposition. It was their honourable distinction to have no personal object: they were separated from other whigs by a conduct purely irrespective of the small selfish motives by which party men are so often misled. The depravity of party conduct is mostly well concealed by the facility which most men find in reconciling their private interests with public principles: a task rendered the easier by confused views; while the most opposite conduct can be justified on most public questions, it must be hard for men of moderate intellect to want reasons for any course of party. It is the peculiar praise of Mr Burke, that he stood apart, through his entire course, from all questionable grounds. That in his system of political opinions there were, at this period, many errors, we have no wish to deny; that there were some, we are sure. Though a man of the most active observation, and of the most profound sagacity, Mr Burke was full of the constructive powers and dispositions of a free and soaring imagination—a quality which, while it widely extends the scope, and effectively aids the faculties of reason, is apt, in the outset of life, to hurry the mind into theoretic views and premature generalizations.

In the intervals of parliamentary attendance, Mr Burke pursued his farming occupations at Beaconsfield, with an assiduity, interest, and even skill, as great as if the breeding of fat porkers, and the sowing of his wheat, were his only end in life. Some of his letters quoted by Mr Prior are remarkable for the proof they contain of this, and verify the remark so often and so variously made of the great extent and minuteness of his acquirements. Every subject on which his attention was turned seems to have been followed out into its least details.

Another incident, illustrative of the perfect freedom of Mr Burke's intellect from false liberality, occurs in the debates of 1772. In February, Sir W. Meredith presented a petition from numerous clergy and laymen, for relief from the necessity of signing the thirty-nine articles. The petition was such as might be expected from a body of grave and pious men who had fallen into some very remarkable errors. Of the debate which followed we cannot speak in terms of equal respect; it was characterized by a degree of ignorance and flippancy difficult to be conceived. The articles were assailed without the slightest appearance of the speakers having even cursorily looked into them. But what was indeed worse, many of the speakers attacked the doctrines of Christianity, and levelled arguments against the articles of the church, which, if they had any weight, were as directly subversive of the plainest assertions of divine revelation in the holy Scriptures. The debate was indeed a curious illustration of the temper of the

times, and of a state of opinion which was at the root of events then preparing to follow. A rationalizing system of mere social morality pervaded the pulpit, and there was no vital religion in the public mind. The New Testament was so little known to the educated laity, that any doctrine above the utilitarian and expedient ethics of the world was quite forgotten, and it was regarded as absurd that religion should have any mystery, because both its end, authority, and entire character were unknown. This error pervades the debate; we shall not particularize the speakers. Mr Burke was among those who resisted the petition on those just grounds of truth and moderation which are the result of a reference to the principles actually involved in the question. He was by nature and habit the uniform advocate of liberty of opinion and of toleration; but this did not prevent him from recognising the absurdity of persons voluntarily adopting the official adherence to a church, and then petitioning to be allowed to hold its offices of trust, and released from its obligations. Mr Burke at once saw that the question was not as to liberty of conscience, but as to the existence of the church. He truly said that there existed no constraint—no one was compelled to adopt or adhere to the church, which is no less than an institution for the maintenance of the doctrines agreed upon by those who belong to it; and to say that the church so constituted was to be administered by those rejecting those very doctrines, involved a direct contradiction.

Mr Burke was among the few who in that day of laxity retained some just sense of the Christian religion, as a revealed religion, and as involving interests and duties beyond the common moralities of social life. The general depravation of religion here referred to was among the very chief of those indications which we can now, looking back along the chain of events, see thickening over that generation as the thunder-cloud of revolution.

It was about this time that Barry the painter, having come home from Italy, was found by Mr Burke to have received the foul taint of infidelity. He entered with zeal, and it is supposed with success, on the task of reclaiming his friend. There is no remaining trace of their conversation on this topic, which Mr Burke, of all men, was likely to have treated in the most masterly style; but it is known that he recommended Bishop Butler's Analogy, which is assuredly the ablest philosophical essay that ever has been written, and worthy of the most important subject. The fact is mentioned, however, as serving to show the just views which Mr Burke must have had on the evidence of divine truth.

In the mean time, American affairs were slowly but decidedly verging to the crisis of actual insurrection. In 1774, many were beginning to have more distinct views of the real tendency of events; though even at this time, there was no anticipation of the eventual result. To this indeed, the utmost reach of liberality had not arrived—it was a new question, on principles not yet contemplated, and having even no explicit connexion with the event. The furthest advances of political speculation on the subject of the colonies are probably to be found in Mr Burke's celebrated speech on "American Taxation," a speech which obtained the applause of all parties. It is the same from which we have already made many extracts in this memoir. We have



now only to mention some of the circumstances. The tea duty had now for a long time been the point on which the dispute appeared to rest, when on the 19th of April, a motion was made for its repeal. Several members had spoken, when Mr Burke rose, in reply to one of the lords of the treasury. The previous discussion had fatigued the house, and numerous persons had retired to the coffee-room, when the report that Mr Burke had begun to speak brought many back; the sensation was rapidly diffused, and the house became crowded. The whole assembly was from the beginning fixed in breathless attention, and the spectators in the gallery were with difficulty restrained from applause. Arguments, illustrations, pathetic appeals, and pointed retorts, succeeded each other with a closeness which allowed no interruption to the intense interest which was excited. The speakers who had preceded were so directly and so pointedly replied to, that there could be no doubt that this surpassing effort was in form and language extemporaneous. Notes were fortunately taken by several persons present; and to this the world is indebted for the preservation of one of the most perfect specimens extant, of the power, compass, and resources of genuine eloquence. At the termination of one of those splendid bursts which followed in rapid succession, "lord John Townsend, who had been familiar with all the former leaders of debate, exclaimed, 'Good heavens! what a man is this! where could he have found such transcendent powers!'" It has of late been usual to depreciate Mr Burke as an orator: this is partly the effect of the strong disposition to lower his reputation, and partly the effect of some malicious and false memoirs, which were written with the same design, and unhappily pre-occupied the ground. The latter biographers, Mr Prior and Mr Croly, and others who have with meritorious industry and research restored his genuine fame and character to light, have not yet had the fortune to dissipate absurd prejudices which party politics have aided to keep alive. Mr Burke is still spoken of with bitterness by a class whose own views in some measure expose the source of such long surviving dislike. When he is mentioned as an orator, it is still not unusual to hear some invidious qualification, such as—that his speeches were pamphlets, or that it is well remembered that he was the "dinner-bell of the house," or some other sneering recollection. But we mention this in order to remark, that this, like most undeserved attacks on public men, has its origin in the misrepresentation or perversion of circumstances. These early splendours of Mr Burke's life were forgotten in the unpopularity of years long after. This with its occasions and consequences we shall soon arrive at; but we would emphatically call the attention of our readers to the statements here offered on the most unquestionable authority, from which indeed it is evident that, during this period of his public life, Mr Burke held an unusual power of commanding the attention and applause of the house. Had the debates been at that time regularly reported as at present, there could be no room for any question on the subject; but the reader may be referred to the brief remains of those discussions in the parliamentary debates, for authority which is at least as good as the posthumous slander of Mr Burke's detractors. In the reports his name seldom occurs without some comment, expressive



of admiration, or stating the effect with which he replied. It was mostly in reply that he rose at a late hour when the attention of the house was nearly worn out; the habit told against him at a later period of his life; but at this time it only served to show the mastery of those unrivalled powers which could break the spell of weariness, and charm his opponents into enthusiastic attention. It has been observed that Mr Burke's official engagement to America as agent for New York, may have stimulated his extraordinary efforts in the cause; we see no objection to the supposition; this engagement undoubtedly had the effect of making such conduct his duty in a more particular sense; it would be a grievous imputation could the opposite reproach have been made: but the after events of Mr Burke's life tend uniformly to prove that he required no stimulus from interest to rouse all the energy of his mind; it was enough if the conflict was for the cause of great principles, and for the welfare of nations. Mr Burke, as can be ascertained from his letters and the recollection of his private conversation, considered the Boston Port bill, as the turning point of events. The publication of his speech, from the notes of many of his friends, produced as strong an effect on the public as its delivery on the house; and it is known that lord North was so impressed by his reasoning as to feel for a time disposed to retrace his steps; and he actually offered in the following session to repeal the tea duty if this would satisfy the colonies.

The death of Goldsmith happened at this time, and Mr Burke with Dr Johnson were the directors of his funeral. On the dissolution of parliament, Mr Burke went to stand his election at the borough of Malton, where, by the interest of his friend the marquis of Rockingham, he was elected. The election was over, and he was sitting down to dinner when a deputation arrived from the city of Bristol, to make offer from the principal persons there, to bring him in free of expense as member for that city. Such a tribute to public character, from one of the largest commercial cities in England, fixes honourably the high reputation to which he had attained. For the same reason, it was at the time of still more importance. He obtained the consent of his constituents at Malton, and set off to Bristol, and after a rapid journey of thirty-eight hours, over 350 miles, he arrived at Bristol on the 13th of October, the sixth day of the poll. Without delay he proceeded to the hustings—and after a few minutes' rest he addressed the electors in a speech which gave general satisfaction.

The contest lasted till the 3d of November, when he was declared elected. On this occasion Mr Burke again addressed his electors. A demand for political pledges, such as is now familiar to the public, was assented to in a declaration from one of the candidates, which made Mr Burke consider it imperative to be explicit on the extent of the duty of a representative to his constituents. Mr Cruger admitted that he considered himself pledged to their will: Mr Burke on this point said "I wish that topic had been passed by, at a time when I have so little leisure to discuss it." "Certainly gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion, high respect; their business, unremitted attention. It

is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfaction, to theirs; and above all, ever and in all cases to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure—no, nor from the law or the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

“My worthy colleague says, his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will on my side, yours without question ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate, and another decide; and when those who form the conclusion, are perhaps 300 miles distant from those who hear the arguments.” He then dwells on the respect to be paid by the representative to the opinions of his constituents, as distinct from the notion of authoritative instructions; and proceeds: “Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different states, and with hostile interests, which interests each must maintain as an agent and advocate against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest, that of the whole; where not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member, indeed; but when you have chosen him he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of parliament.” This bold assertion of his freedom, at such a moment, speaks highly for the independent spirit of the speaker. There never was a moment when the substance of Mr Burke’s opinion and the reasons by which it is maintained have been more important than in the present. The numerous interests which constitute the whole of a great country cannot be fully, fairly, or wisely viewed, unless in relation to the whole; the deliberation of parliament has to contemplate and deal with a large adjustment of interests, which in some respects conflict, but in a wider aspect promote each other. The public at large is composed of classes, and on many of the most important questions can have but partial knowledge—no well-founded opinions: the most decided and best grounded opinions will be those of the class whom they concern, and will by that class be urged inconsiderately to, and beyond their true application. The science of legislation does not demand less wisdom, and is not less the result of study than numerous other sciences on which no one would presume to speak without due preparation. But then it will be observed that there are questions on which a universal excitement is produced;—are these properly the subject of popular decision? Assuredly not: the people, necessarily ignorant beyond the sphere of their sensations, are on those occasions actuated by the persuasion of a few. This is what is at present known by the term agitation: it consists in expanding the will or opinion of one, or of a few active-minded and ambitious, or it may be public-spirited (but not very wise) individuals, over the lower classes of the



community. Its direct and immediate tendency is the dissolution of all constitutional order. It may by chance be the essential effect of progress, but when it is, the consequence is revolutionary; for it is when this becomes the required remedy of a vicious state of things, that the will of the public, in its literal sense, is to be called into action. On such occasions the wisest and best will be foremost, and there will be *no contest between ranks and orders*: there will be *no demagogues*: these are the true tests of the character of public movements. It is for these reasons, to which we give the least possible expansion, that we think it important to look discriminatively on the claims of what is called *public opinion*. The *real* grievances of the people, such as they *can* understand because they feel them, are an essential part of the concern of government: to impart to the people a full sense of these, demands no dictation from popular orators: but to redress them, always demands a degree of skill, which none but the most informed legislator can possess. The agitator cannot be further debased from his noisy office of disseminating popular malcontent and folly; but members of the legislature are false to their duty when they sanction a principle so false and pernicious, and the parliament is wanting to itself when its assertion is countenanced by being tolerated in the debates.

It was about this time (1774) that Mr Burke entertained his friend Dr Johnson at Beaconsfield, together with the Thrales. Johnson, though violent in his aversion to whigs, yet made an exception in favour of the only contemporary to whose intellect he allowed a real superiority. To Mr Burke alone he was accustomed to listen with respectful deference, and often with an admiration commensurate with his own keen perception of all intellectual excellence. Johnson dealt in that class of notions which lie within the range of practical existence—the business and bosom of life: he was a sagacious observer, a dexterous logician, a humourist, and a wit. In some of these respects, Mr Burke was his equal; in none much his inferior. But, in addition, Mr Burke had a range of his own, in which, like the eagle, he towered alone, and glanced afar on the objects of a wider horizon. He had the comprehension that could grasp the complicated and various interests of nations—the unwearied nerve of attention, and vigour of reason, that could master and reduce to order the most numerous and remote details—the imagination that could embody—the fancy and passion that could animate and enliven the least promising statements. Mr Prior, in his elaborate comparison between the two, observes:—"Johnson, on the whole, had more erudition; Burke, inexhaustible powers of imagination. Johnson possessed a pungent, caustic wit; Burke, a more playful, sarcastic humour; in the exercise of which, both were occasionally coarse enough. Johnson, had his original pursuits inclined that way, would have made no ordinary politician; Burke was confessedly a master in the science; in the philosophy of it, he is the first in the English language, or perhaps in any other; and in the practice of it, during the long period of his political career, was second to none. Added to these were his splendid oratorical powers, to which Johnson had no pretension!" Such a companion, to one like Johnson, was as a volume of perpetual meditation and interest; for, with a more bounded compass, the doctor was keen to follow, and prompt to seize



new thoughts. Mr Burke supplied a fuel for thought, which, next to the pleasure of dictation to his wondering hearers, the doctor loved the best. Mr Burke, whose affections and hospitality of temper were not less remarkable in their more limited sphere than his more eminent qualities, was the life and delight of his own circle; and while he exerted all his fascination to make his home agreeable to his revered friend, he softened and repressed the exercise of that power which, elsewhere, at times, made their intercourse less grateful to one whose ambition was colloquial victory. While wandering through the grounds, Dr Johnson is mentioned to have expressed his admiration of his friend's good fortune and good taste. After indulging in a fit of that thoughtful meditation to which he was accustomed, he broke silence with the exclamation, "*Non equidem invideo, miror magis!*" In the same year, Mr Burke had the opportunity to defend the doctor's pension in the house against Mr Thomas Townsend.

In the mean time, the excitement of public feeling upon the American question continued to increase in all its tendencies. George III., with an inflexibility for which he cannot be fairly condemned, regarding it as his duty, was firm in his resolution against concession. The people of England, with more of national pride, and less of principle, shared in this disposition; but they were mainly actuated by the desire to divide their burdens with the colonies. On the other hand, the mercantile classes and communities, with increasing anxiety, deprecated the course which they saw must end in hostilities. From these Mr Burke received increasing testimonies of the value of his exertions to stay the infatuated policy of government. In 1775, he received a public letter of thanks from the merchants of Birmingham. He this year came forward with a proposal of thirteen resolutions for conciliation, which he introduced with a speech no less celebrated for its effects than that of the previous year. It contains many of those passages of consummate eloquence, only to be paralleled in his speeches; in which the highest and most kindling imagination takes its ground on the profoundest reason, and the most permanent and vital truth. It is with regret that we forbear from the example of others, who, pursuing a more detailed course, have made liberal extracts. Lord Chatham remarked, that it was "very seasonable, very reasonable, and very eloquent;" and Mr Fox, twenty years after, said of it, in the house, "Let gentlemen read this speech by day, and meditate upon it by night; let them peruse it again and again, study it, imprint it on their minds, impress it on their hearts." Now that the question is settled, and that time has approved the policy of Mr Burke, praise of no mean kind may be extracted from the censure of those who looked upon him as a formidable adversary. Thus, dean Tucker (says Mr Prior) "represented him as the most artful reasoner living; one who could amuse with tropes, and figures, and fine words, without allowing his design to be seen, till he had intrapped the reader or hearer irrecoverably in the meshes of his argument."

In the summer Mr Burke paid a second visit to Paris. There, as on the previous occasion, he saw with repugnance and dislike the visionary and unpractical tendency which the *philosophes* were gra-

dually imparting to the national mind. The consequences lay yet far within the clouds of the future; Mr Burke thoroughly understood, and often stigmatized in his speeches the absurdity of such philosophy when applied to questions of government; but there was a tone of spirit then apparent in the society of the French metropolis, which demanded no supernatural insight to associate with gloomy and sad forebodings for coming times. There was a libertinism in politics, religion, and morals, inculcated in the upper and among the middle ranks, with a brilliant competition, by those men who were the well-known heralds, and most of them the first apostles of the most blighting revolution which ever fell upon a great people. In looking on such portentous signs, the wisest and best men are seldom hardy enough to follow them to the results they foreshadow. The tendency to look hopefully on the destinies of man, suggests the hope that such visitations are but transient; it is felt vaguely that truth and reason must prevail, and that quacks and mountebanks cannot abide the test of time. The impression is most just; but that it allows too much for the good sense of the world, and too little for the rapidity and diffusiveness of impulses originating in its passions and frailties; the mischief is soon done; but the triumph of truth is too often the gift of experience. At this moment, the dawn of change, terror, and destruction was on its way; the dawn perhaps of a better day to come, but itself originating in madness and crime.

The struggle with America was not without its widely influential moral efficacy on the minds of observing nations. The discussion was everywhere pursued, and, as will ever be the case, on principles far too wide and abstract; however just may have been the conclusion, folly had considerable share in the argument; however glorious the triumph of liberty, it was not altogether a triumph of truth. French philosophy was not slow in imparting its poison to a spirited nation which eagerly looked to France for aid; France, too, had her representatives and scholars in the school of American revolution. Every nation of Europe had some blood relationship in the stirring and striving scene. Agitation never found so fair a field; for there was a broad basis of right and truth, which, when once seized upon, and echoed by unreflecting millions, would not fail to be applied where it had no application. Mr Burke, of course, could frame no adequate conception of the events; but, with the reason of a keen and skilful statesman and casuist, he saw what was erroneous in theory, and criminal in practice, and he was perhaps thus prepared with alert and sharpened apprehension to appreciate events when they had attained a more forward growth.

He obtained another opportunity for a splendid speech in this year, in which he still affirmed with confidence that the adoption of the policy which he had been uniformly proposing, would have the effect of pacifying America; and that he was probably right has been inferred from the difficulty with which the declaration of independence was carried by the States,—“One,” says Mr Prior, “of the most curious facts perhaps in modern history. Six States voted for, six against that measure; and the delegates of Pennsylvania were equally divided in opinion, when at length a member, who had hitherto strenuously opposed it, suddenly changed sides, and decided the question.”



Meanwhile, blood was drawn in the field, and the American war began: its progress is foreign from our task. The successive discussions to which it continued to give rise, involve no principle not previously applicable. One feature of considerable importance, connected with future statements, is the part which France and Spain, though yet at peace with England, took in the struggle. Their numerous privateers, vessels chiefly employed about the West India Islands, were employed in the service of America. They were formally fitted out with American papers and ensigns, but chiefly manned by subjects of France and Spain. There was no doubt of the hostile policy of these two courts, and the facts admit of none; but it was the first origin of future troubles. A continued sympathy, and an active communication, were kept up between France and the provinces; and the Americans were encouraged to look for decisive aid from the French. French enterprise and adventure sought, and were encouraged by their government in seeking, this new field of enterprise: many, too, went to teach and learn lessons by which France was afterwards to profit. To leave as little doubt as possible on the connexion of events, it will be only needful to observe well the tone and character of the demagogues and principal leaders of the public mind in the colonies. Among the people, there was no object beyond the complaints which were publicly expressed; but there is every reason for the conclusion that Franklin and other influential persons, all through, contemplated independence, but were still compelled to suppress views which, until the public mind should first be prepared by events, might have an effect unfavourable to their design. To awaken the desired feeling, means were now used: of these, the most effective was the clever sophistry of the infamous Tom Paine. Franklin, while in England, had early observed his fitness for the work of revolution, and advised him to seek his fortunes in America. Paine acceded; and, having made his way to Philadelphia, soon became an active propagator of opinions of a republican texture. Of his pamphlet "Common Sense," it may be said to have been a main instrument, by the vastness of its circulation, and the unprecedented popularity it at once obtained. It is generally admitted by the historians of the American war, that its appearance quickly and effectively altered the popular mind. This opinion is strongly attested by the fact of the public rewards and honours which were his compensation. He received grants and promotions, and was long looked to as the oracle of all their measures.

It was, of course, seen by numerous observers, abroad and at home, that the same rash counsels which had hurried on the war, were now engaged in directing it to no good issue. The Opposition in the British parliament was, from time to time, loud in proclaiming the errors of the war, in praising the valour, and elating the confidence of the colonists. The distance and geographical character of the country were each the cause of inconveniencies, difficulties, and dangers: the troops were necessarily inadequate in numbers; wanting in resource, and acting over a spacious and difficult country, little inhabited, intersected by vast rivers, and covered in every quarter with vast and trackless forests. These considerations were vainly pressed on the minister; and it was urged that a naval force alone could have any efficiency.



The declaration of independence shocked Mr Burke, because he had really formed no views on the subject. He considered the existing interests of America, and the supposed wishes of the Americans; he saw the wretched instrumentalities which early menaced a young people, still seemingly with narrow resources, and little discretion; he felt their relationship of blood: but, above all, the honour and safety of England lay at his heart; and many reflections could not fail to be awakened, which will hereafter more distinctly come under our notice. England, thus engaged in a rash and ill-concerted war with her colonies, was also menaced by her powerful neighbours.

In the termination of 1776, the marquis of Rockingham, with his party, for a time entertained the design of an entire secession from parliament on all American questions. This was, however, prevented by Mr Burke's arguments, in a letter addressed to the marquis. On the 6th of February following, he made a speech on the employment of the American Indians in the war. The effect of this speech was such as to excite extraordinary admiration in the hearers. Colonel Barre said, that, if it were published, he would nail it up beside the proclamation for a general fast; and governor Johnstone exclaimed, that it was fortunate for the noble lords (lords North and Germaine) that there were no strangers present. Sir George Saville, himself a first-rate speaker in the house, said, "He who did not hear that speech, has not witnessed the greatest triumph of eloquence within memory."

A few days after, lord North brought forward a plan of conciliation, founded on that formerly proposed by Mr Burke, and was taunted by Mr Fox for having adopted these opinions "from his honourable friend." It is, however, evident enough that the question had shifted its grounds altogether in the minds of Americans.

In the same session, proposals were made by lord Nugent for the revival of the Irish commercial restrictions. Mr Burke supported the motion, in a speech which drew upon him the displeasure of his constituents. In Ireland, on the other hand, it excited a popularity of the most ardent kind; and, there, proposals were entertained to set up his statue. But the support which he gave afterwards to Sir George Saville's bill, though highly offensive to his constituents, and in part the means of his being subsequently rejected at the general election, was insufficient to satisfy the ferocity of national zeal and party spirit in his native country; and he was as much abused and vilified in Ireland now, as he had been, a little before, praised and applauded. It was among the high moral virtues of Mr Burke to have become nerved against the uncertain changes of popular opinion. He, nevertheless, felt it right to explain the motives of his conduct to Mr Burgh, in a letter, which was circulated, and found its way to the press, though such was by no means the intention of Mr Burke.

There was this year felt much pressure, from the financial embarrassments caused by the war: the public discontent was increased by many of its incidents, and its general want of success: the expectations of the country had been disappointed, and the heavy expense had only purchased failure and disgrace. In consequence, there was a loud cry for parliamentary reform and retrenchment. Reform has ever been the popular panacea for all public discontents: its effect is to alter the

balance of power in the orders of the state. As understood in England, this alteration must have operated, so far as it had any operation, to transfer power from the higher to the lower classes. Such a process must have been prejudicial, or not, according to the actual state of both. At that period there were numerous influences at work, of which it had been the tendency to produce this very effect, to an extent of which the advantages were doubtful, and the disadvantages, though not quite developed, great, obvious, and certain. But it has ever been the favourite resource of the demagogue—for it serves the two dominant dispositions of his nature—to acquire a low popularity, and to pull down those who are exalted. Mr Burke, who was solely influenced by his own views of what was best for the public good, was at no time seduced into the support of this great popular question; and he was already beginning to be impressed with a sense of the growth of a democratic and levelling temper in England. He was also under the conviction that much evil had been the result of the depression of the aristocracy, which he attributed to the influence of the crown, directly exerted for the purpose. Under this double persuasion, he made up his mind as to the course of conduct best adapted to the occasion. In precise accordance with this general view, the conduct of Mr Burke will be found, on fair consideration, to be consistent with the principles of a constitutional whig of the Revolution of 1688; prompt to repress all encroachments on the liberty of the subject, without conceding to the still more menacing encroachments of popular exaction. He had, however, at the time of which we speak, fallen into a degree of unpopularity, the fruit of his conduct on the Irish and American questions, which the party with whom he still continued to be entangled considered as a considerable deduction from his value. His friends felt, and he could not help feeling, that some effort was wanting to restore the efficiency of his power over the popular mind. The popular cry was for reform and retrenchment: Mr Burke, in conformity with his own principles, undertook to bring forward the latter. With the independence of his character, he spurned from him the senseless outcry of the people, and at the same time engaged in an attack of unprecedented boldness and self-devotion upon the profuse and prodigal jobbing of the court. Still, under the fallacious impression of his party, that the influence of the crown was obtaining a dangerous preponderance, he devoted himself and his prospects to the duty of resistance. It was on the 15th of December, 1779, that he gave notice of his motion for retrenchment; and on the 11th of the following February, that he introduced it, with a speech which is well known to every political student. It is not necessary to enter on the subject; but the effort of genius, and its effects, cannot be passed in silence. Mr Prior writes:—"No public measure of the century received such general encomium. Few speeches, from the opposition side of the house, ever fell with greater effect than this; and of itself, had he never made any other, would place the speaker in the first rank of orators and practical statesmen, for comprehensiveness of design, minute knowledge of detail, the mingled moderation and justice towards the public and to the persons affected, the wisdom of its general principles, and their application to local objects." After enumerating the

various objects of retrenchment, running through the whole establishment of the crown, in all its departments, Mr Prior stops to praise the singular boldness of the plan. But we must leave room for contemporary praises, which Mr Prior, with a laudable industry, has selected and preserved. "It must remain," said Mr Dunning, in a burst of admiration, "as a monument, to be handed down to posterity of his uncommon zeal, unrivalled industry, astonishing abilities, and invincible perseverance. He had undertaken a task big with labour and difficulty—a task that embraced a variety of the most important objects, extensive and complicated; yet such were the eminent and unequalled abilities; so extraordinary the talents and ingenuity; and such the fortunate frame of the honourable gentleman's mind; his vast capacity, and happy conception; that, in his hands, what must have proved a vast heap of ponderous matter, composed of heterogeneous ingredients, discordant in their nature, and opposite in principle, was so arranged as to become quite simple as to each respective part dependent on each other; and the whole, at the same time, so judiciously combined, as to present nothing almost, to any mind tolerably intelligent, to divide, puzzle, or distract it."

"Mr Burke's reform bill," says Gibbon, "was framed with skill, introduced with eloquence, and supported by numbers. Never can I forget the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator was heard by all sides of the house, and even by those whose existence he proscribed." Of these latter, Mr Gibbon was himself one. Numerous other testimonies equally strong and explicit might be brought forward.

The bill was committed, and several months were occupied in the discussion of its clauses, during which Mr Burke continued the struggle against ministerial odds, with a degree of wit, argument and eloquence, which were the wonder and admiration of the house. Having made up his mind to defeat, he came to the discussion with "all that ready wit, pleasantry and good humour, which are the real features of his character."

The speech is still to be found in his published works, and may without any doubt be recommended as among the most standard efforts that ancient or modern times have produced, whether judged as a speech, or as a masterly exposition on the subject it treats. Like many of Mr Burke's highest efforts, no passage can be selected without some injustice to all the rest; but we select ours not as a specimen, but because it happily exemplifies one quality of the speaker's mind, which we have already taken some pains to illustrate: we mean his lofty imagination, and the congenial veneration with which it turned to the solemn and sublime. Speaking of the expenses lavished upon waste and useless labours, he proceeds to show that the change of manners has antiquated and rendered obsolete the use of the ancient gothic establishments of state; "the royal household has lost all that is stately and venerable in the antique manners, without retrenching anything of the cumberous charge of a gothic establishment;" dwelling a moment on this, he goes on "but when the reason of old establishments is gone, it is absurd to preserve nothing but the burthen of them. This is superstitiously to embalm a carcass not worth an ounce



of the gums that are used to preserve it. It is to burn precious oils in the tomb; it is to offer meat and drink to the dead; not so much an honour to the deceased, as a disgrace to the survivors. Our palaces are vast inhospitable halls. There the bleak winds, there 'Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus, and Argestes loud,' howling through the vacant lobbies, and clattering the doors of the ancient guard-rooms, appal the imagination and conjure up the grim spectres of departed tyrants—the Saxon and the Norman and the Dane—the stern Edwards, and the fierce Henrys who stalk from desolation to desolation through the dread vacuity, and melancholy succession of chill and comfortless chambers. When this tumult subsides, a dead and still more frightful silence would reign in this desert; if every now and then, the tacking of hammers did not announce that those constant attendants in all courts, jobs, are still alive; for whose sake alone it is that any trace of ancient grandeur is permitted to remain. These palaces are true emblems of some governments; the inhabitants are decayed, but the governors and magistrates still flourish. They put me in mind of Old Sarum, where the representatives, more in number than the constituents, only serve to inform us that this was once a place of trade, and sounded with the 'busy hum of men,' though now you can only trace the streets by the colour of the corn."

We cannot enter at length into the history of the riots in London, excited by lord George Gordon. Mr Burke was among those whose parliamentary conduct had been such as to render him particularly obnoxious to the agitated mob, which for a few days menaced the safety of London. The circumstances are memorable for the calm and lofty courage which they were the occasion to call forth. Mr Burke came to town, and as he himself mentions in a letter "my wife being safely lodged, I spent part of the next day in the street amidst this wild assembly, into whose hands I delivered myself, informing them who I was!" Mr Prior, from whom we have extracted this passage, also quotes a newspaper to the following effect:—"This day (June 6th,) a detachment of foot-guards took possession of the Westminster hall, the doors of which they at last closed to prevent the mob from entering there: several members of both houses who walked down on foot, were thus prevented from getting into the house for a considerable time, among whom was Mr Burke, who was presently surrounded by some of the most decent of the petitioners, who expostulated with him on his conduct, in abetting Sir George Saville's motion for the Roman catholic bill. Mr Burke, in his defence said, that he had certainly seconded the motion for the bill, and thought himself justified in so doing; he said he understood he was a marked man on whom the petitioners meant to wreak their vengeance; and therefore he walked out singly among them, conscious of having done nothing that deserved their censure in the slightest degree, having always been an advocate for the people, and meaning to continue so."

A strong proof and illustration of the universal spirit in which Mr Burke's mind embraced the true interests of humanity as the fundamental ground of his actions, is the fact that in this year he conceived and arranged a plan for the mitigation of that darkest spot in human history, the slave trade. It was for strong party reasons considered

objectionable to bring forward such a measure, the opposition feared the powerful parties which would be offended by so decided and bold an interference with great commercial interests. Mr Burke was the more ready to concede the point to the great party with which he was as yet inextricably entangled, because he was well aware that the effort must be ineffectual against the strength of government, backed by the strongest corporate interests. The plan which he drew up may be found among his writings; it is like all his works of the kind, a remarkable proof of indefatigable industry and comprehensive views—it still more remarkably proves the intelligence far ahead of his generation. His views have been at last adopted and carried into effect in our own time, even to the adoption of his language.

On the dissolution of parliament in 1780, he went to Bristol to stand his election. He was well aware of the probabilities which existed against him. His conduct had on two eminent occasions been directly opposed to the wishes of his constituents; and he knew that complaints of the most illiberal kind had been made of his neglect to visit that city. On this occasion he addressed the electors in the Guildhall, in a speech well known, and deservedly placed at the head of all popular speeches for its singular combination of fine tact and address, with a frankness and manliness not often to be detected in the language of public men. He vindicated himself by maintaining his principles of conduct: the invidious charge of neglect he repelled by a brief and forcible statement of his services; his labours for individual constituents had been as great and onerous as if he had laboured in no other character than as an agent, a solicitor, and a shipbroker. "A visit to Bristol," he said, "is always a sort of canvass; else, it will do more harm than good. To pass from the toils of a session to the toils of a canvass is the farthest thing in the world from repose. I could hardly serve you as I have done, and court you too. Most of you have heard that I do not very remarkably spare myself in public business; and in the private business of my constituents I have done very near as much as those who have nothing else to do. My canvass of you was not on the 'change, nor in the county meetings, nor in the clubs of this city. It was in the house of commons—it was at the custom-house—it was at the council—it was at the treasury—it was at the admiralty—I canvassed you through your affairs, and not in your persons. I was not only your representative as a body, I was the agent, the solicitor of individuals; I ran about wherever your affairs could call me, and, in acting for you, I often appeared rather as a shipbroker than as a member of parliament."

He then complained that while he had been engaged in the laborious details of the economical reform bills, a canvass against him had been carried on with great activity in that city; that promises and pledges had been sought for to move him from his seat as if he had been dead, or as if his laborious performance of a duty which bound him to the last day of session, had been regarded as the resignation of his seat. He next, delicately but forcibly, reminded them of the delusions into which they had been led respecting the American war, as a motive at one time for not visiting them. He next entered upon their main charges, and justified himself boldly on his conduct upon the



question of Irish trade and the Catholic relief bill. These general questions we shall not enter upon here, but his bold and characteristic introduction must not be omitted. "As to the other matters objected against me, which, in their turn, I shall mention to you; remember, once more, I do not mean to extenuate or excuse. Why should I, when the things charged are among those upon which I found all my reputation? What would be left to me if I myself were the man who softened, and blended, and diluted, and weakened all the distinguishing colours of my life, so as to leave nothing determinate or distinct in my whole conduct?" He then discusses his conduct in the Irish trade bill, and on the relief bill, briefly, and with force unusual even beyond his accustomed power. On his part in lord Beauchamp's bill for reforming the law process concerning imprisonment, he is equally forcible. In the course of his remarks on this point, he introduces a eulogy on Mr Howard, which has been often quoted for its beauty. "I cannot," he said, "name this gentleman, without remarking that his labours and writings have done much to open the eyes and hearts of mankind. He has visited all Europe; not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals or to collate manuscripts;—but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, poverty, and contempt; to remember the forgotten; to attend to the neglected; to visit the forsaken; and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original; it is as full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery; a circumnavigation of charity. Already the benefits of his labour is felt in every country; I hope he will anticipate his final reward by seeing all its effects fully realized in his own." These sentiments are not only valuable because they are beautiful and just, but because they, with peculiar felicity, describe the whole heart of the speaker. Varying as every man who has much in him will vary through life in opinions, which progress with circumstances and the accumulation of knowledge, Mr Burke's conduct is invariably to be referred to the profound humanity of his nature, and his *fondness* "for the right." But, while he was yet connected with a great party, which like all great parties, looked, in the main, exclusively to aggrandizement and power—to the contest of faction—and the establishment of their own views in opposition to those of their antagonists; and while this great party to which he was attached, was fast undergoing a degrading change, from liberality to liberalism, and suffering a strong infusion of new, powerful, and unprincipled mind; the love of right—the redress of real grievances—the remedy of real defects—will be found as clearly originating and governing his conduct from first to last. Referred to merely party tenets, his conduct will be often hard to reconcile; and some such difficulties have arisen, because men are accustomed so to refer all political conduct: but referred to the great fundamental elements of social order, the principles of right, truth, and justice, and even to that enlarged expediency which Mr Burke himself has so well described, no difficulties appear; no change can be detected.



His party changed, but he continued firm to the only principles he ever professed.

Mr Burke's address to the electors concluded with a characteristic touch of pathos. After stating the crimes of which he was not charged, he proceeded—"The charges against me are all of one kind—that I have pushed the general principles of justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant; and further than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident that may happen me through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress, I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted."

The most respectable portion of the constituency would have unquestionably supported him had he stood the contest: as he said in his parting address, if he were so inclined, he had in his hands the means of a sharp contest. But the fickle and capricious breeze of popularity had taken a decided turn, and he made up his mind to decline proceeding further. This he announced in a plain brief address, remarkable for its genuine and unaffected manliness of spirit and characteristic sincerity.\* He was returned for Malton, which he continued to represent during the rest of his public life. There is a very highly characteristic story of Mr Burke, of which the origin is referred by his historians to this period of his life. While remaining at his friend Mr Noble's, a respectable citizen of Bristol, he met a clergyman, who was an inmate of the house, and in whose conversation and manners he discerned much to be pleased with and approve. Having learned that this worthy gentleman was simply a poor curate, he expressed his wish to have an opportunity to be of use to him. It was some years after, that the incumbency, in which the clergyman had been, and continued to be, still as curate, fell vacant by the rector's death, on which he applied to Mr Noble to remind Mr Burke of his promise. The preferment was in the gift of the Prince of Wales. Mr Burke imme-

*Bristol, September 6th, 1780.*

\* At a great and respectable meeting of the friends of Edmund Burke, Esq., held at the Guildhall this day: The Right Worshipful the Mayor in the chair.—Resolved, "That Mr Burke as a representative for this city, has done all possible honour to himself as a senator and a man, and that we do heartily and honestly approve of his conduct, as the result of an enlightened loyalty to his sovereign; a warm and zealous love to his country, through its widely extended empire; a zealous and watchful care of the liberties of his fellow-subjects; an enlarged and liberal understanding of our commercial interest; a humane attention to the circumstances of even the lowest ranks of the community; and a truly wise, politic, and tolerant spirit, in supporting the national church, with a reasonable indulgence to all who dissent from it; and we wish to express the most marked abhorrence of the base arts which have been employed, without regard to truth and reason, to misrepresent his eminent services to his country.

Resolved, "That this resolution be copied out, and signed by the chairman, and be by him presented to Mr Burke, as the fullest expression of the respectful and grateful sense we entertain of his merits and services, public and private, to the citizens of Bristol, as a man and a representative.

Resolved, "That the thanks of this meeting be given to the right worshipful Lord Mayor, who so ably and worthily presided at this meeting.

Resolved, "That it is the earnest request of this meeting to Mr Burke, that he should again offer himself a candidate to represent this city in parliament; assuring him of the full and strenuous support which is due to the merits of so excellent a representative."

diately proposed that the curate should write a letter to the Prince, which he undertook to present. The letter was accordingly written, and Mr Burke repaired to Carlton House, was graciously received, and succeeded according to his wishes—the prince at once granted the prayer of the curate's petition. Mr Burke returned thanks; but in the warmth of his feelings, the usual fulness of heart and head, carried him on into the wonted flow of speech, and he was delivering an animated discourse on the duties and interests of princes, when the recollection of the circumstances, and presence in which he stood, and a sense of the violation of court usage, rushed upon his mind: he stopped short, abruptly, and commenced an apology. "No apology is necessary, my dear Mr Burke," said the Prince, with that grace for which he was so remarkable, "from your lessons we all derive wisdom; and, it is to be regretted, that so few imitate your candour."

The anecdotes which are on record of Mr Burke's humanity, indicating that leading disposition of his mind, which is so essential to the right understanding of any portion of his public conduct, are far too numerous for our comparatively brief memoir. This we are bound to state distinctly, because otherwise, some injustice follows the scanty selection which we are enabled to make from the pages of Mr Prior and others: facts which compose a uniform and characteristic distinction in the tenor of life, and peculiarly characteristic of the individual, are in danger of appearing simply as accidental. There, is, perhaps, no great man of whom such good deeds cannot be told; and, for the best deeds, there may be motives of no very exalted kind. But with regard to Mr Burke, we must emphatically say, that anecdotes such as the above are not accidents, but rather specimens of that which is the proper and unalienable character of Mr Burke's mind—a leading and first principle to which the just biographer must per force refer, in the explanation of all his political, as well as private life, and by which alone, his virtues and infirmities can be truly understood. One more anecdote from the deep and valuable repository of Mr Prior's extended narrative, must be here related, not only for its intrinsic importance, but because it carries in it some evidence to these reflections, and shows not only that such was Mr Burke's character, but that it was so understood by the wise and good, and by all whose discernment was not obscured by faction. With this preface, we shall give the story in Mr Prior's own words; simply mentioning what this gentleman omits, we presume, from a motive of delicacy, the name of the person to whom the story relates; the poet Crabbe, in whose lifetime Mr Prior's book was published:—"It was about this period that the kind feelings of Mr Burke were appealed to by a young and friendless adventurer, subsequently an eminent poet, whose name on the present occasion it is unnecessary to mention, who, buoyed up with the praise his verses, had received in the country, and hope of bettering his fortune by them in London, had adventured on the journey thither with scarcely a friend or even acquaintance who could be useful to him, and with no more than *three* pounds in his pocket. This trifle being soon expended, the deepest distress awaited him. Of all hopes from literature he was speedily disabused; there was no imposing name to recommend his little volume, and an attempt to bring it out himself



only involved him more deeply in difficulties. The printer, it appeared, had deceived him, and the press was at a stand from want of that potent stimulus to action, which puts so much of the world in motion. Hearing, however, or knowing something of an opulent peer then in London, who had a summer residence in his native country, he proposed to dedicate to him his little volume, and the offer was accepted; but, on requesting a very small sum of money, to enable him to usher it into the world, he received no answer to his application. His situation now became most painful; he was not merely in want, but in debt; he had applied to his friends in the country, but they could render him no assistance. His poverty had become obvious, he said to the persons with whom he resided, and no further indulgence could be expected from them; he had given a bill for part of his debt, which, if not paid within the following week, he was threatened with a prison; he had not a friend in the world to whom he could apply; despair, he added, awaited him whichever way he turned.

In this extremity of destitution, Providence directed him to venture on an application to Mr Burke. He had not the slightest knowledge of that gentleman other than common fame bestowed; no introduction but his own letter stating these circumstances—no recommendation but his distress; but, in the words he used in his letter, "*hearing that he was a good man, and presuming to think him a great one,*" he applied to him, and as it proved, with a degree of success far beyond any possible expectations he could form. Mr Burke with scanty means himself, and unbribed with a dedication, did that which the opulent peer declined to do with it; but this was not all; for he gave the young poet his friendship, criticism and advice—sent some part of his family round to their friends to collect subscriptions for his work, introduced him to some of the first men in the country, and very speedily became the means of pushing him on to fame and fortune."

This year, his son Richard Burke, was called to the bar, and took chambers in the Middle Temple. Of this young man the very highest expectations were formed by the affection of his sanguine and enthusiastic father. Much must be allowed for the magnifying tendency of Mr Burke's imagination, when it became the slave of his humanity, love, or any of the nobler emotions of his nature. But various contemporary authorities justify the inference, that young Burke was not wholly unworthy of his father's sentiment of admiration. His talents were known to be considerably above the common level, his acquirements extensive, his amiability, good feeling, affection for his father, and generosity of character, conspicuous. He was the love and pride of his parent, and his loss the last dark cloud under which that high and magnificent spirit sunk broken to the grave.

In the session of 1780, and 1781, Mr Burke exerted himself with all his wonted vigour in various questions in the front of his party. On these we shall not enter, as it has been our object to reserve our space for those great leading topics in which the memory of Mr Burke is more essentially involved. Some of these were however closely connected with the history of his conduct with regard to India—to these we may be led to revert summarily. We shall only here observe, that he early began to take such a part in Indian politics, as by



degrees not only to acquire a prodigious mastery of the subject, but a deep interest in the welfare of that wide section of the human race, which led to and colours the events of one great portion of his life.

It has been thought, that if the dissolution of lord North's administration had occurred a few years sooner than it did, Mr Burke would in all likelihood have been called to the head of public affairs. This opinion is stated by Mr Prior; it is also highly supported by every probable consideration. At the time to which it refers, Mr Burke was at the head of the great party to which he belonged—his powers justly appreciated on every side, and in every quarter—his wisdom and virtue rightly judged—his services appreciated; and there was a sense that in any great emergency, of which many already were beginning to rise over the horizon of British prospects, his would be the only head and heart to pilot the vessel of the state. Such a selection, had, it is true, many obstacles, in the will of the king, in the character of Mr Burke, in the constitution of party in general, and of his party in particular. The king had been too long and too often thwarted by the Rockingham party with which he disagreed in principle. Mr Burke though united with that party as the main champion and advocate of the great leading questions which engaged it, had yet in his nature a strong bent which as it became developed into action, was little congenial to the real views of any party, and irreconcilably at variance with the growing divergency of Whiggism from its original form and spirit. These considerations must be separately expanded; they are to be illustrated by different events in the order of succession.

As the member of a party, Mr Burke yet "stood alone," he was among them, yet not of them. In the current of mingling characters and motives, he was a drop which was borne in a stream with which it could not mingle. Among his associates, the good loved him, the wise revered him, but the good and wise are not the party. The intrigue, the selfishness, the narrow views which are prompted by selfishness, and guided by intrigue, and of which power and the personal objects which it involves are the ultimate aims—the factious *esprit de corps* which is the combining principle of classes; these were the animating spirits of his party, as they ever were and will be of all parties. In the midst of this most heterogeneous system of motives and influences, there was no real sympathy with Mr Burke; he was formidable and useful, and therefore he was honoured and supported. He was the sail and helm, the master and pilot; the measures which he advocated, whether on principle or from prepossession, answered also the no less earnest but more mean views of opposition. They ran a common course with different ends. But there was in all Mr Burke's deportment, in his conversation, and in every minute detail of his conduct, invariably something of the distinction on which we have dwelt, too obvious not to be felt by all. His abstract enlarged views, his continued reference to principles and aims essentially different, his refinements and distinctions only important when referred to the truth of things and the integrity of conduct, were all trifling, wearisome and overpowering, to those to whom measures were but

stalking-horses, and maxims hoods and masks. All felt thoroughly, in proportion to the length of their views, that there must be a point of separation: having different ends, there must come a separation in the road. Admitting this statement, it will be easily understood with what spirit Mr Burke's alliance was cherished for a long time by the deep, ambitious, and intriguing policy of Mr Fox; and how little there was in him to conciliate the support of the crowd, which is to be won by promise, flattery, and subornation. On the accession of his party to power, the supremacy of their leader was at an end. From an enlightened guide and a vigorous pioneer in the shelter of whose prowess they had advanced, he was at once felt to be an obstacle, who could not accommodate himself to the occasion and the views it might happen to bring forth.

We shall not trust our pen with the character of his pupil, friend, and (we must say it,) perfidious rival, Mr Fox, whose talents and popular qualifications have obtained for him a respect of which it is difficult to understand the foundation; it has survived his day; history has few such riddles as the eulogy of Mr Fox's admirers. The same pen which mentions him as a prodigy of all the virtues, describes him with unconscious censure as the slave of every vice.\* Prodigal and profligate in private life, inconsistent in his party, without any practical common sense in his political aims, save that which can be resolved into a fiery devotion to base popularity; but endowed with all the talents of debate;—all the attractions of manner and temper that acquire ascendancy and influence. Artful and vigilant to discern and gain advantages, without any principle to restrain; but outwardly, so frank, manly, so kindly tempered, and so impulsive as to prevent suspicion, turn jealousy aside, and win regard. He was constituted by nature to play on a large scale the game of the demagogue—too vain, ambitious, and unprincipled to take a higher aim, he availed himself of his friends, of his party, of events, and of every turn and change of public feeling to work his way to the head of affairs. He was strongly endowed with those passions and sentiments which are mainly the result of temperament, but which have the effect of imparting impulse to all the moral affections; there was a warmth in his kindness which was rendered still more effective by the recklessness of temper which gave a tone of artless simplicity to all he said; and which deceived the most shrewd of those who fell under the attraction of his playful and exuberant cordiality of manner. The whole compound was magnified and rendered irresistible by the well-known *prestige* of public admiration, splendid powers, and the associations which belong to family importance.† Such was the man, who first starting into public

\* See Mr Wallace's Life of George IV.

† The following extract from Mr Prior, offers we think a sound and discerning view of Mr Fox. "Mr Fox, his political pupil and friend, who had been for some time treading closely upon his heels in parliament, and who had now advanced to an equality in the conduct of business there and to superior popularity out of doors, finally took the lead. For this there were some obvious reasons. Inferior to his tutor as a great and commanding orator, and what ought to be of more consequence to the country, as a wise and sound statesman, he frequently excelled most men in vigour of debate; but more especially possessed a peculiar tact beyond all his



life as the admirer and follower of Mr Burke, gradually passed him in the race which he was more fitted to run, and stepped into the position which Mr Burke could no longer hold, than while the whigs adhered to the calm high course of their ancient political faith.

With such objects, and leaders well suited to those objects, when Mr Burke's nominal followers came to the point at which their actual views were to be apparently realized; he was himself no longer in any degree fitted for their purpose. He at once, from an effective engine of progress, became an embarrassment and a restraint. It was secretly felt that they would be less encumbered without him; but there was still a deep habitual respect: there were ties of gratitude, veneration, and strong regard. They could not even entertain the question of shaking him off—nor if they did, might it seem an easy or even safe attempt. But to place in the cabinet, an old leader so prompt, so zealous, and so ready to put forth his heart and mind into his measures, would be to adopt a master there: they considered him too peremptory, earnest, and intractable, for any lesser part. But the high tone of irrespective truth, right and justice, were the decisive disqualifications of

contemporaries, and all his predecessors, without exception, for being at the head of a political party. He enjoyed all the weight which birth and connexion (and these are essential objects among the whigs of England) could give; his acquaintance with the great was necessarily extensive, and his friendships nearly as general with the young, by community of pursuits and pleasures, with the old and staid, by community of information and talent. His fortune originally was considerable, had it not been squandered; his temper in general easy; his thirst for popularity excessive; his manner adapted to gain it; and his sacrifices to ensure it; his very faults were with many more matter of jest and favour than of censure. Some of his doctrines were more to the taste of the people, who placed confidence in his sincerity; and with scarcely a shilling he could call his own, they were pleased to think him in spirit the most independent.

"In all these points he had the advantage over his coadjutor, who also suffered some loss of weight by his rejection at Bristol; by his disregard of the popular voice when he thought it ill directed; by a more uncompromising temper; by being supposed to be a dependant of lord Rockingham, and among a certain class, by being a native of Ireland. There was unquestionably a jealousy through life of the merits and influence of Mr Burke, even among those who advocated the same cause, which nothing but very uncommon powers and exertions enabled him to surmount, and of which he frequently complained. Under all these disadvantages, however, he had kept the effective lead in the commons for ten years; and had lord North fallen three years sooner, would have been made efficient minister; the common opinion, early expressed at the table of lord Rockingham, being that 'he was the only man who could save the empire from dismemberment.' Even just before that minister's resignation, he himself remarks, he had obtained a considerable share of public confidence, notwithstanding the jealousy and obloquy which had assailed him during much of his career. 'I do not say I saved my country—I am sure I did my country much service.' There were few indeed that did not at that time acknowledge it.

"That Mr Fox should now prevail, with Westminster at his back, with unbounded popularity in the nation, and the advantage of that aristocratic feeling in his favour, obviously inherent in the public mind on all public matters, forms no cause for surprise. Mr Burke who considered humility in the estimate of ourselves a species of moral duty submitted to the sense of his party without a murmur. A vain man would have resented this; a weak one complained of it; an ambitious or selfish one probably taken advantage of it, on the first opportunity, to quit the connexion for ever, and throw the weight of his name and talents into the opposite scale."



Mr Burke. They would not have him in the cabinet; they could not omit him in the list of office; they took a middle course, they pressed it upon him to take office as paymaster of the forces. This, with a seat in the privy council, was his share in the distribution of office. The slight was become less repugnant to the sense of his party, from the degree of depreciation necessarily sustained by his removal from Bristol to a borough: and it was felt or pretended to be felt, that it was desirable to strengthen the new cabinet by a selection of persons of weight and consequence. To all this, Mr Burke assented with the natural humility of his character, which Mr Prior remarks, (we think most truly,) he carried too far, and to his own disadvantage through every part of his public life. Indeed it was one of those high and beautiful features of his mind, which operated often to his injury—in private and public life, it rendered him liable to be set aside with facility, wherever any personal interest of his own entered, or appeared to enter, into the business. In the interest of others, and in the cause of mankind, his firmness against all the influences which overpower the infirmity of our nature, rose to a moral heroism unparalleled in history: but in his nature all those strong sentiments which converge on self, were deficient.

His conduct, with regard to his office, affords an ample justification for the wisdom of those whose will and work it was to defraud him of his appropriate place and authority. It placed beyond doubt his unfitness for the purposes of party; and set, in the most conspicuous light, his stern intractability to private motives. The established emoluments of the office included the interest of a large portion of public money lying in bank in the paymaster's name. This perquisite of office amounted to something near £25,000 a-year. The appropriation of this large emolument was perfectly admissible, on the ordinary grounds recognised in human opinion: there was nothing in it which was questionable, on the ground of honesty or honour; it was prescriptive, and stood on admission. It was conformable to the purest integrity; but it had in it something repugnant to the more than Roman virtue of Mr Burke's mind. He could not reconcile it to his own principles of public conduct, that a strenuous reformer of the public economy should in his own person present a flagrant case of the most lavish improvidence: he could not brook the inconsistency of such a perquisite, with the advocacy of economical reform. He did what no other public person, of whom we have any present recollection, would have done—he relinquished the whole. The narrowness of his income, with his free hospitality and lavish generosity, made and kept him poor. He was frequently embarrassed; and, both by his wants and natural inclinations, must have been fully sensible of the temptation to increase his fortune. But his deep truth, his consistency, and his entire nonconformity to the views and ends of faction, are attested by the large sacrifice thus made without hesitation. The fact ought to be fully appreciated, because it not only accounts for the treatment of which he was the subject, but it contains the best reply to all the invidious and unworthy slander which has been so industriously employed in finding, by forced construction, low motives for all his actions. Every place-hunter, every keen jobber, and peculating

nibblers of official perquisite must have been the bitter enemies of such a man; and felt their lowest bile stirred up by such a practical demonstration of hostility.

It is not essential here to go at length into the history of the short administration now in office. The marquis of Rockingham, admitted with great reluctance by the king, entered upon office, with stipulations in themselves not of a nature to lessen the unfavourable impression. It was understood that the concession of independence to America, with certain measures of public reform, should be adopted by the government. In consequence, Mr Burke was allowed to bring in a bill for the reform of the public expenditure, by which savings were effected to the amount of £72,000 a-year. Many members of his party objected to its falling short of his former bill; but Mr Burke had wisely, in the present, looked to the consideration of what it would be possible for him to effect. With great difficulty, he was at this time permitted to carry through, the largest measure of its kind that had ever been attempted by any one, or even contemplated by any administration. A bill for the regulation of his own office followed, but was not carried through. Many wise and able designs were cut short by the death of the marquis of Rockingham, which dissolved the government. Lord Shelburne was appointed to his place at its head, without the consent or privity of the other members of the cabinet. In consequence, the leading members at once sent in their resignations. Mr Pitt was then appointed chancellor of the exchequer: Mr Burke made way for colonel Barré.

The new administration did not stand long, nor does its history offer much material for the present narrative. The debate on the address, December 6, 1782, brought on an interesting collision between Mr Burke and Mr Pitt, in which their respective powers of eloquence appear to great advantage. Mr Fox, who succeeded them in the debate, has given us the following commentary:—"He agreed totally and entirely with his honourable friend, who had, with so much wit, but not with more wit than argument and truth, exposed its absurdities and follies. It was the happy and envied talent of his honourable friend to join wit so ingeniously with his argument, that he always entertained while he instructed—that he enlivened while he enlightened his auditors."

This administration was of brief duration: lord Shelburne was deficient in party strength. Among the prominent leaders of the whigs, whether in or out of office, some disliked, and the rest despised him. He made overtures to Fox; but this gentleman, though quite willing to come on any terms into place, would not consent to serve under lord Shelburne: by a bold and reprehensible step, in contradiction to his own public professions, he entered into a treaty with lord North; this led to the celebrated coalition, which has been so strongly, and, we must allow, so justly, censured. With respect to the share of this censure to which Mr Burke is fairly exposed, it would be miserable trifling with principles to explain it away: we must, however, limit its amount: it was one of a class of offences, of which the amount must depend on the motive and design; it does not arise from any natural law, but from a very artificial convention. Its real character



of wrong arises chiefly from the mischiefs to which its general practice might lead; and still more, the imputations to which it is liable. Mr Burke's well attested moderation, his disregard of power and emolument have proofs singular in the history of statesmen. His romantic zeal for the general objects which he still imagined to be those of his party, are equally placed beyond reasonable question: his consent had, at least, no base or selfish motive. He was eager, too eager, for the ascendancy of his party: he looked to vast questions, and to the hope of effectuating measures of policy, which could be successfully pressed only by a party armed with the powers and influence of office. He had been the opponent of lord North; but it had been an opposition unmixed with rancour; he had not, like Mr Fox, pledged himself by any express declaration on the subject. Mr Fox had indeed acquired, at the time, the same powerful ascendancy over Mr Burke that he had over every one else in connexion with him: he was, as yet, a transcendently powerful ally in many a good cause; and he had, from causes already noticed, become the great leader of the popular party. He coalesced with lord North, as he would have coalesced with anybody, good or evil, to force his way to the head of affairs. In consequence of the coalition thus effected, Mr Fox was enabled to overturn the administration of lord Shelburne, and to establish in its place one of too short a duration to demand any special detail from us. To some facts we may be compelled presently to revert; but, at present, it will be enough to mention a trifling discussion, of which Mr Burke's official conduct was the immediate subject. In the interval between his former resignation and subsequent return to the pay-office, two of the principal clerks of that office had been dismissed. Their imputed crime was connivance at an act of peculation. Mr Burke, while carrying through the reforms of his office, had received the most valuable assistance from them; their usefulness and general competency was so very great, that their dismissal had nearly arrested the whole business of the office, and the clerks had declared their inability to conduct it without them. Mr Burke's first consideration was, that their dismissal was a punishment so severe and ruinous, that it ought not to be inflicted until the misdemeanor should be fully proved; he consequently, and we think justly as well as mercifully restored them; for this, he was attacked in the House during the spring, by lord Newhaven and Mr Rolle—he defended himself on Mr Rolle's motion with his usual eloquence. The accused clerks were tried on an information in the court of King's Bench; one of them committed suicide, and the other was found guilty. Mr Burke was, as usual, roughly handled for his alleged leniency to these delinquents: but at worst, there is nothing in the part he took of sufficient weight to demand any defence. From the charge of confiding in the integrity of others, we have no care to defend him—of zealous pity and protection for those whom he had befriended and found useful in their proper departments, still less. This was indeed in him one of the infirmities of a sanguine and lofty mind, which lent its whole force to all his acts and thoughts. In the high and elevated singleness of both his moral and intellectual nature, he was little actuated in his judgments, by the conventional notions of the world,—he was free from the common illusions which accompany



the tendency to impute low motives; but on the other hand, he was exposed to the errors which will always be liable to arise from this very freedom: for, in the affairs of life, the judgments of mankind are much enlightened by a familiar experience in low motives. Mr Burke's mind stood in a higher atmosphere; his were the faults and perfections of those who see and reason for themselves. His own motives were too noble for suspicion—his sense of right too deep to suffer him to be quick in perceiving the common want of real sympathy in other minds; but the very same cause rendered his indignation fierce and longbreathed when he found perfidy, injustice, and the violation of those principles of right to which he found it hard to conceive any one indifferent. In these considerations may be found the explanation of much of his conduct, on which we have now to enter:—and it may be useful also to recall another feature, which should be seen in connexion with them, as it must lead to an important distinction. His mind was engrossed with large and important questions, and it is from the consideration of these that his conduct with regard to his party is to be judged. He belonged to his principles and not to his party; his party was adhered to for its subserviency to his general views. On questions of small moment, he did not exercise any discretion: such an unqualified freedom would admit of no combined action.

It was indeed owing chiefly to this last mentioned tendency of mind that Mr Burke so long continued to be entangled with the degenerated party of which he had long been the leader—bound by habits of action and intercourse, as well as by strong affections and a constancy of temper that was slow to admit any thought of change, he still was carried on in the channels of old alliance, so long as none of the great questions and fundamental views on which his political creed rested became the cause of disunion. As Mr Burke has been, with much acrimony, accused of inconsistency, it is our design to refer the following incidents of his political life to the principle mainly involved in this statement—that he throughout adhered to his political creed, with a constancy rarely to be equalled, and a tenacity approaching to excess: and that he could not have adhered to his party without abandoning his principles, and lowering his reputation. In matters of inferior moment alone was he ever a partisan; in every important question he himself gave the direction to his party. They deserted their leader, and not he them.

One great incident of his life, was the means of prolonging his connexion with the Fox party, long after he had begun to dissent from their views: it was the trial of Warren Hastings. It was and is still the ground of much severe censure, and was the means of imbittering his declining years. To relate its principal circumstances a little more fully, though still too briefly, we pass over numerous details of inferior moment.

The history of British India is well known, how, in the course of a century, a vast and magnificent empire grew up from a petty factory. To comprehend more thoroughly the great questions to which we must advert, some attention must be paid to the means by which this empire grew up, and its very peculiar constitution. In its first growth it was painfully and laboriously fostered by all the arts of

circumvention and diplomatic address: gaining ground at home by intrigue and bribery—in India by tolerance won from the native princes, both on account of its weakness from which no danger was apprehended—and from the wealth which it poured into their coffers.—Enlarging its borders by favour and purchase, often experiencing reverses from the fluctuations of party, from dissensions, from the awakened suspicions and perfidious cruelty of the native kings, from the intrigues of rival settlers, Dutch, Portuguese, and French; it still gained ground through numerous vicissitudes and emergencies, but in all by a policy, and against a policy, which made fraud and treachery prescriptive principles. From the factory of Surat to the Presidency of Calcutta, its progress was a continued struggle of force and stratagem, in which each party engaged on either side had recourse to proceedings which appeared to sanction similar retaliations. At last by the bravery and military genius of one great man, the empire of British East India was placed on a broad basis of superior strength, rivals were overawed and reduced, and the native rulers, from being protectors, became by their own crimes and errors protected and dependant. Right, as has often happened in the course of time, had slowly changed sides; but a conventional system had also been established, in which all the notions of European equity were unknown. Of this, it seems to have been the latent but well understood principle, that any stretch of fraud and violence was justified by the safety of a great empire, as well as by the fraud and violence against which it was necessary to maintain it. This anomalous policy gave rise to, sanctioned, and was supported by, a pervading dissoluteness in the whole commercial intercourse of the settlement. From the President's council to the office of the lowest clerk, bribery was legitimated; the natural corruptibility of men, sanctioned and excited by habits and understandings, took a novel, and perhaps unprecedented range; so that deeds were done without shame or question, of which the very slightest imputation in England would convey infamy. The following representation is the forcible portraiture of Mr Burke himself. "The natives scarcely know what it is to see the grey head of an Englishman. Young men (boys almost,) govern there without society, and almost without sympathy with the natives. They have no more social habits with the people than if they still resided in England; nor, indeed, any species of intercourse, but that which is necessary to making a sudden fortune, with a view to a remote settlement. Animated with all the avarice of age, and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in, one after another; wave after wave; and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is continually wasting.

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There is nothing in the boys we send to India worse than the boys whom we are whipping at school, or that we see trailing a pike, or bending over a desk at home. But as English youth in India drink the intoxicating draught of authority and dominion before their heads are able to bear it, and as they are full grown in fortune long before they are ripe in principle, neither



nature nor reason have any opportunity to exert themselves for remedy of the excesses of their premature power. The consequences of their conduct, which in good minds (and many of theirs are probably such,) might produce penitence or amendment, are unable to pursue the rapidity of their flight. Their prey is lodged in England; and the cries of India are given to the waves and winds, to be blown about in every breaking up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean. In India all the vices operate by which sudden fortune is acquired. In England are often displayed by the same persons the virtues which dispense hereditary wealth: arrived in England, the destroyers of the nobility and gentry of a whole kingdom will find the best company in this nation at a board of elegance and hospitality. Here the manufacturer and husbandman will bless the just and punctual hand that in India has torn the cloth from the loom, or wrested the scanty portion of rice and salt from the peasant of Bengal, or wrung from him the very opium in which he forgot his oppression and his oppressor. They marry into your families—they enter into your senate—they ease your estate by loans—they raise their value by demand—they cherish and protect your relations which lie heavy on your patronage—and there is scarcely a house in the kingdom that does not feel some concern and interest that makes all reform of our eastern government appear officious and disgusting; and, on the whole, a most discouraging attempt;—in such an attempt you hurt those who are able to return kindness, or to resent injury. If you succeed, you save those who cannot so much as give you thanks.”

From these considerations, the difficulty which seems to rest upon the history of the trial of Mr Hastings, may be satisfactorily explained to any one whose mind is disengaged from the prejudices which have obscured it. They will on one side account for the strong impression which existed among many respectable parties that Mr Hastings was hardly treated: on the other, they add strong corroboration to the opinion, (otherwise, indeed, amply verified,) that there was clear and decided grounds to warrant Mr Burke’s conduct, without the necessity of any derogatory explanation.

There were, in fact, strong pleas in justification of Mr Hastings, and such as would fully palliate any enormity in the eyes of the mere public, and still more of the interested few. It appeared, as it ever will appear, a hardship to be the first singled out to suffer the penalty of long sanctioned offences. For men seldom weigh offences by the strict scale of right and wrong, but by prejudice and habit. It seemed partial, because it was new and singular; anomalous, because it was not the law as confirmed by practice. The iniquitous conduct of a long conventional policy was suddenly arrested in the person of an individual, in whose administration it rose to an unusual degree of atrocity. But there were other grounds of palliation: the conduct for which Mr Hastings was assailed, was strongly vindicated by the circumstances. The total absence of sordid and selfish motives—the strong emergencies which demanded it—and generally the fact that it was prescribed, not only by the interests of the company, whose servant he was—but by those of the British population in India, and by those of England.

On the other side, such considerations were not those likely to have



any weight in the judgment of Mr Burke. He was by no means severe or fastidious in over strictly balancing the ordinary delinquencies of private men, and little inclined to harshness, or even unreasonable strictness in private transactions; because his views and even his passions were framed upon an unusually broad and extensive scale. Conversant by nature and habit with wide theories and large questions, he had strong habitual impressions upon those comprehensive truths which are seldom realized in the understanding of ordinary men. To such a mind the great interests of humanity lost not an atom of weight by distance, or by reason of the constitutional difference of language, manners, and opinions, which conceal from vulgar apprehension the common nature of mankind. It was the master passion of Mr Burke to embrace with all the powerful sympathies of his nature, and to conceive with all the grasp of his spacious comprehension, the remotest and most foreign aspects of humanity. The very infirmities of his mind grew out of and confirmed this disposition: the tenacity of purpose early observed—the self-accelerating enthusiasm, and the sanguine temper—all had the effect of imparting a deep earnestness of purpose, which when crimes and sufferings which obtained a haunting command of his imagination, became the subject, lent to his manner and language a spirited animosity, which to the vulgar might appear vindictive, and by the misrepresentations of really vindictive calumny, might be speciously so named.

Such is the view which an attentive perusal of the whole history of British India, together with the trial of Mr Hastings, has irresistibly impressed upon us. It is necessary to be brief and summary in the particulars, which shall, however, be sufficiently stated to satisfy any reasonable person as to the justness of our inferences.

The first distinct intimation we find of Mr Burke's intention, occurs in December 1803, in his speech on Mr Fox's East India Bill, of which he is generally supposed to have been himself the author. This bill deserves also some passing notice, not only as illustrative of the points which we have been pressing, but as leading to this illustration in the language of Mr Burke himself.

The general scope and intent of Mr Fox's bill was to vest the affairs of the East India Company in the hands of commissioners appointed by government. The mismanagement of their financial concerns, and still more the abuses of their administration, and the discreditable and iniquitous policy pursued in their transactions with the native princes, afforded grounds for interference, against which the most effective defence on the other side, seems to have been the plea of chartered rights. This point was afterwards urged against Mr Burke as an inconsistency, when he became the strong defender of right and order; it will therefore be not unimportant to hear his own defence: after remarking that there were four main objections to the bill which he enumerates in order, he goes on to explain that two things of different descriptions, are confused under the phrase of chartered rights. Certain covenants by which the rights and liberties of a nation are secured, are to be distinguished from covenants granting special privileges and powers to a small number of persons. These latter, he justly contended, involved

trusts which may be abused to the extent of forfeiture; they may be limited by the rights of the grantor, and cannot be allowed to transgress the great inalienable rights of humanity. "The charters which we call by distinction *great*, are of this [the first mentioned] nature; I mean the charters of king John and king Henry the Third. The things secured by these instruments may, without any doubtful ambiguity, be very fitly called the *chartered rights of men*. These charters have made the very name of a charter dear to the heart of every Englishman. But, Sir, there may be, and there are charters, not only different in nature, but formed on principles the *very reverse* of those of the great charter. Of this kind is the charter of the East India Company. Magna Charta is a charter to restrain power and destroy monopoly. The East India is a charter to establish monopoly and to create power. Political power and commercial monopoly are *not* the rights of men; and the rights of those derived from charters, it is fallacious and sophistical to call 'the chartered rights of men.' These chartered rights (to speak of such charters and their effects in terms of the greatest possible moderation) do at least suspend the natural rights of mankind at large; and in their very frame and constitution are liable to fall into a direct violation of them." \* \* \* \*

Having made this distinction, which cannot, we think, be conclusively resisted, he admits the right, under these conditions, to the fullest extent. "But having stated to you of what description the chartered rights are, which this bill touches; I feel no difficulty at all in acknowledging the existence of those chartered rights in their fullest extent. They belong to the company in the surest manner, and they are secured to that body by every sort of public sanction. They are stamped by the faith of the king—they are stamped by the faith of parliament; they have been bought with money—for money honestly and fairly paid; they have been bought for valuable considerations, over and over again. I therefore freely admit to the East India company, their claim to exclude their fellow-subjects, from the commerce of half the globe. I admit their claim to administer an annual territorial revenue of seven millions sterling; to command an army of 60,000 men; and to dispose (under the control of a sovereign imperial discretion, and with the due observance of the natural and local law,) of the lives and fortunes of thirty millions of their fellow-creatures. All this they possess by charter, and by acts of parliament, in my opinion, without a shadow of controversy."

He then dwells strongly on this admitted right, as involving a trust, and as such rendering them accountable; and infers that they must be accountable to parliament, which is itself responsible as the author of the trust. He then affirms that when a trust is betrayed, the contract is broken, and that the grantor has a right of resumption. He next describes the proposed bill as a "great charter" for the liberties of Hindostan.

Mr Burke has been sometimes mentioned as a refiner and a metaphysician, and charged with the faults of unpractical speculation. And yet among the great reformers of past or present generations, he is to be distinguished for the rejection of speculative reforms. In the speech now under our notice, he expresses his own view of this subject



with the utmost force and distinctness, and his remarks may be offered as expressive of the just distinction by which so much of his conduct is to be rightfully tested. Men of narrow and indistinct conceptions are not unfrequently led into the errors of vague theory, from the very shortness of their powers of apprehension and discrimination. When the limited range of common sense is overpassed, under the notion of science or of liberal and enlarged views; by persons who are deficient in those rare powers of systematic observation which can grasp the actual whole of the social state—however subtle may be their reason, however vast their powers of generalization, they will be found among the fogs and vapours of theory. Mr Burke's wide glance on the other hand, looked through the whole broad range of both the moral and social nature of man—combined actual views of the processes of change—the diversities and similarities of nations and their institutions in one digested and arranged system of real knowledge arising from the nature of things and not from the conjecturings of theory. "I do not presume," he said, "to condemn those who argue *a priori* against the propriety of leaving such extensive political powers in the hands of a company of merchants. I know much is, and much more may be said against such a system. But, with my particular ideas and sentiments, I cannot go that way to work, I feel an insuperable reluctance in giving my hand to destroy any established institution of government, upon a theory, however plausible it may be. My experience in life teaches me nothing clear upon the subject. I have known merchants with the sentiments and abilities of great statesmen, and I have seen statesmen with the conceptions and characters of pedlars. Indeed my observation has furnished me with nothing that is to be found in any habits of life as education, which tends wholly to disqualify men for the functions of government, but that by which the power of exercising those functions is very frequently obtained; I mean a spirit, and habits of low cabal and intrigue; which I have never in one instance seen united with a capacity for sound and manly policy."

The bare perusal of this speech would perfectly satisfy any candid person of the true spirit in which he entered upon the prosecution of Mr Hastings. It displays the extent and magnitude of his views, the enthusiasm with which they were entertained, and also the force with which the objects of his attention became realized and rendered present to his imagination. The following sketch will also help to illustrate the industry with which he rendered himself master of his subject; it will, further, show its true importance, and justify, as well as explain, the impassioned zeal with which he was absorbed into it:—"With very few, and those inconsiderable intervals, the British dominion, either in the Company's name, or in the name of princes absolutely dependent upon the Company, extends from the mountains that separate India from Tartary to Cape Comorin; that is, twenty-one degrees of latitude! In the northern parts it is a solid mass of land, about 800 miles in length, and 400 or 500 broad. As you go southward it becomes narrower for a space. It afterwards dilates; but, narrower or broader, you possess the whole eastern and north-eastern coast of that country, quite from the borders of Pegu. Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, with Benares—now unfortunately in our imme-



diate possession—measure 161,978 square English miles; a territory considerably larger than the whole kingdom of France. Oude, with its dependent provinces, is 53,286 square miles,—not a great deal less than England. The Carnatic, with Tanjore and the Circars, is 65,948 square miles,—very considerably larger than England; and the whole of the Company's dominions, comprehending Bombay and Salsette, amount to 281,412 square miles, which forms a territory larger than any European dominion, Russia and Turkey excepted. Through all that vast extent of country, there is not a man who eats a mouthful of rice but by the permission of the East India Company."

Having thus displayed the extent of these dominions, he proceeded to estimate the population. He observed that a great decline in this respect had attended the domination of the Company, and thus summed the result,—“However, if we make the period of our estimate immediately before the utter desolation of the Carnatic, and if we allow for the havoc which our government had even then made in these regions, we cannot, in my opinion, rate the population at much less than thirty millions of souls; more than four times the number of persons in the island of Great Britain.”

After going at more length into a detail of the ranks and values of this population, he proceeds to state in very forcible terms the crimes of the Company:—“First, I say that from Mount Imaus—or whatever else you call that large range of mountains that walls the northern frontier of India—where it touches us in the latitude of twenty-nine—to Cape Comorin in the latitude of eight, that there is not a *single* prince, state, or potentate, great or small, in India, with whom they have come into contact, whom they have not sold. I say *sold*, though sometimes they have not been able to deliver according to bargain. Secondly, I say that there is not a *single treaty* they have ever made which they have not broken. Thirdly, I say that there is not a single prince or state who ever put any trust in the Company, who is not utterly ruined; and that none are in any degree secure or flourishing, but in the exact proportion to their settled distrust, and irreconcilable enmity to this nation.”

He then proceeded to a lengthened detail of the instances. They are at length summarily dismissed as follows:—“In Bengal, Seraja Dowlah was sold to Mir Jaffier; Mir Jaffier was sold to Mir Cossim; and Mir Cossim was sold to Mir Jaffier again. The succession was sold to his eldest son. Another son of Mir Jaffier, Mobareeh al Dowlah was sold to his stepmother. The Mahratta empire was sold to Ragoba, and Ragoba was sold and delivered to the peishwa of the Mahrattas. Both Ragoba and the peishwa of the Mahrattas were offered for sale to the rajah of Berar. Scindia, the chief of Malva, was offered to sale to the same rajah; and the soubah of the Deccan was sold to the great trader Mahomet Ali, nabob of Arcot. To the same nabob of Arcot they sold Hyder Ali and the kingdom of Mysore. To Mahomet Ali they twice sold the kingdom of Tanjore. To the same Mahomet Ali they sold at least twelve sovereign princes called the Poligars. But, to keep things even, the territory of Tinnevely they would have sold to the Dutch; and, to conclude their account of sales, their great customer, the nabob of Arcot himself, and his lawful

succession, has been sold to his second son, Amir al Omrah, whose character, views, and conduct, are in the accounts on your table. It remains with you whether they shall finally perfect this last bargain."

In proving his charge of breach of treaties, he makes a statement which ought not to be passed, as it contains not only some evidence of these charges, but, indeed, the main justification also of the abuses which they criminate. "The governor-general has even amused himself and the court of directors, in a very singular letter to that board, in which he admits that he had not been very delicate with regard to the public faith; and he goes so far as to state a regular estimate of the sums the Company would have lost, or never acquired, if the rigid ideas of public faith entertained by his colleagues had been observed." The conclusion of this speech was directly pointed at Mr Hastings, whose conduct he painted in such colours as nothing but a strong and lively indignation could originate.

The following passages were perhaps but the direct preliminary to subsequent proceedings. "But observe, Sir," he exclaims, "the spirit of this man, which if it were not made manifest by a thousand things, and particularly by his proceedings with respect to lord Macartney, would be sufficiently manifested by this,—What sort of article, think you, does he require this essential head of a solemn treaty of general pacification to be? In his instructions to Mr Anderson he desires him to admit 'a vague article' in favour of Hyder. Evasion and fraud were the declared basis of the treaty. These 'vague articles,' intended for a more vague performance, are the things which have damned our reputation in India." After several statements sprinkled with language in a similar spirit, he proceeds in his pointed and graphic style to give a general description of the policy of the Company in their dealings with the native princes. "The invariable course of the Company's policy is this:—Either they set up some prince too odious to maintain himself without the necessity of their assistance, or they soon render him odious by making him the instrument of their government. In that case, troops are bountifully sent to him to maintain his authority. That he should have no want of assistance, a civil gentleman, called a resident, is kept at his court, who, under pretence of providing duly for the pay of these troops, gets assignments on the revenue into his hands. Under his provident management debts soon accumulate; new assignments are made for these debts; until, step by step, the whole revenue, and with it the whole power of the country, is delivered into his hands. The military do not behold without a virtuous emulation, the moderate gains of the civil department. They feel that, in a country driven to habitual rebellion by the civil government, the military is necessary; and they will not permit their services to go unrewarded. Tracts of country are delivered over to their discretion. Then it is found proper to convert their officers into farmers of revenue. Thus, between the well-paid civil, and well-rewarded military establishments, the situation of the natives may be easily conjectured. The authority of the regular and lawful government is everywhere and in every point extinguished. Disorders and violences arise; they are repressed by other disorders and other violences. Wherever the collectors of the revenue, and the farming



colonels and majors move, ruin is about them, rebellion before and behind them. The people in crowds fly out of the country; and the frontier is guarded by lines of troops, not to exclude an enemy, but to prevent the escape of the inhabitants." After stating the consequent reduction of the revenues, he goes on,—“ To complete the business, most of the wretched remnants of this revenue are mortgaged, and delivered into the hands of the usurers at Benares,” &c. \* \* \* “ The revenues, in this manner, failing, they seized upon the estates of every person of eminence in the country, and, under the name of *resumption*, confiscated their property.”

Towards the conclusion of this speech, Mr Burke brings forward in detail several of the same specific charges which became subsequently the matter of his articles of impeachment. To this we must now advert more distinctly. But we have drawn thus largely on this celebrated speech, as affording the most unequivocal view of Mr Burke's own opinions, as well as in some measure completing the details essential to the just appreciation of his entire conduct upon Indian politics, and in the prosecution of Mr Hastings. There are, considering the special purpose of this memoir, two important points to be set right,—the manifest and generally admitted policy of the proposed bill; and the reiterated accusation against Mr Burke of having been actuated by a malignant spirit. Neither of these will now demand much detail.

To Mr Pitt's objection, that this bill was a violation of chartered rights, we have left Mr Burke to defend himself: he has answered the objection, and we think fully and satisfactorily. But it has been observed, and we must allow truly, that it violated the principles of the constitution. It must have enabled Mr Fox to institute a commission, independent of the crown and parliament, with powers so enormous, as to enable them to attain to an irresponsible influence above either. This commission, to be composed of the personal friends and mere creatures of Mr Fox; persons not in any other way qualified for the wide and complicated duties which he would have trusted to them, and entirely subject to his counsel and guidance, and devoted to the promotion of his aims; would have soon placed Mr Fox on the summit of his daring and unprincipled ambition, and made him the master of England as well as India. But it is easy to conceive the enthusiastic and impassioned energy of Mr Burke, fired by the deep apprehension of the atrocious and wide-wasting iniquities which we have endeavoured to set before the reader as they were impressed on his mind. His head and heart were filled with vast and splendid conceptions of India; its ancient history had fired his imagination; the truly dreadful wrongs sustained by its princes and people worked on his pity, which was perhaps the master-passion of his breast. To this great subject others were sordid and poor. He looked to the direct objects of the commission, and only saw that independence is one of the safeguards of integrity: the objection escaped his notice. His *real* infirmity operated to conceal it—too much confidence in the integrity of others was his blind side. He trusted in the political honesty of Mr Fox: he did not yet see his motives, though they were clearly discernible to



many inferior men. The exclusive direction of his thoughts is well illustrated by his indignant rebuke to the previous speakers in the debate. At the outset of his speech, he solemnly tells them "we are on a conspicuous stage, and the world marks our demeanour;" he is therefore "pained" by the petty spirit in which they have entered on the subject, as if it were a question of "private property, or about a corporate franchise;" and reproaches them with "the total silence of these gentlemen concerning the interest and well-being of the people of India," &c. This was in his breast the ascendant passion of the hour; from it his eloquence is wholly drawn.

As to any personal feeling towards Mr Hastings, there is no ground for its assumption, either in fact or in the character of Mr Burke. The absence of any such is plainly shown by the attempt to prove it. It has been attributed to the alleged fact that Mr Hastings was deficient in attention to his friend Mr William Burke in India. The notion is ridiculous; and only illustrates the flippancy of petty spite, in the assertion of such a motive for such actions. Mr Burke, though capable of being elevated beyond the bounds of temper in the assertion of the vast interests to which his mind was devoted, was remarkable for the generosity of his private and personal impulses. He might, we grant, be excited to a degree of animosity which we do not mean to justify; but it was free from the sordid malignity which belongs to narrow selfishness and contracted understandings. His conduct not only does not require, but does not admit of such imputations. It is enough that he believed all his charges against Mr Hastings; they are not now so easily disproved; and they were such that no punishment could equal, no indignation capable of human conception approach. But the large class of men, whose conduct and sentiments mostly indicate the undue exaltation of narrow interests, are as remarkable for their incompetency to the conception of those broader views which concern mankind, when they are not in some way rendered palpable by the connecting bond of private interests. That any public man should seriously take to heart the wrongs of the other side of the globe—of a people whose language, customs, and moral constitution were so widely different from their own—was not to be conceived. It stood on a level with religion, which so many think out of place beyond the church door, and are ready to sweep away from the common daylight of slight and transitory concerns. It is enough that Mr Burke's understanding was one that could pervade the entire compass of human realities with the same vital sympathy as the clergyman can devote to the good of his parish. He believed in as fearful a mass of wrongs and suffering as the records of time contain. The zeal and pertinacity of his conduct were entirely consistent with his sense of duty.

The first attack on Mr Hastings grew directly out of the general statement already noticed, and in part repeated above. There was at the time no further object than the measures of redress, in support of which he spoke: these were *his* reasons for the proposed bill. But he had been long and intensely engaged on India affairs; and, so whole was his devotion to the subject, that he withdrew his thoughts from all beside. In 1780, and 1781, two committees were appointed on India affairs; of these, one was a secret committee: it was confined

to no party, and consisted, therefore, of both sides of the house. Its object was to investigate the conduct of the judges. Of this, Mr Burke was the most laborious member. There was brought under its attention a considerable body of most flagrant wrongs. On bringing in a strong and decisive report in affirmation of these, the committee was directed to continue its labours on a more comprehensive range of inquiry; and its instructions involved the subject of the administration of India affairs in every conceivable aspect. The consequence was, that the next report implicated the conduct of Mr Hastings himself, and this with full consent and privity of some who afterwards were foremost in espousing his cause. Mr Dundas was chairman of the committee, and brought up the report. This report concluded with a statement that "Warren Hastings, Esq., governor-general in Bengal, and William Hornby, Esq., president of the council at Bombay, having, in sundry instances, acted in a manner repugnant to the honour and policy of this nation, and thereby brought great calamities on India, and enormous expenses on the East India Company: it is the duty of the directors of the same company to pursue all legal and effectual means for the removal of the said governor-general and president from their said offices, and to recall them to Great Britain."

Such was the actual commencement of the series of incidents out of which the prosecution of Mr Hastings arose, as a very natural consequence. It may serve to satisfy the mind, that there must have been ample motive and ground for it, altogether independent of the necessity of finding forced and tortuous reasons in the assumption of sentiments which have no probability either in the person to whom they have been imputed, or in any previous incidental causes. As we have already admitted, it is by no means unlikely that Mr Burke was strongly affected by such excitements, but they were effects not causes. It is impossible for a mind endowed with keen passions and strong zeal, to take up some great cause replete with the elements of wrath, and from a sense of duty, and, however reluctantly, to act the part of hostility, without catching some portion of its fire. This must be admitted to be an infirmity; but it is the common infirmity of our nature. Opposition, often both unfair, acrimonious, and provoking, will fan the flame of zeal into passion—defiance will provoke hostility; and no one, alive to humanity, can read the statements from which we have borrowed some slight extracts, without strongly feeling that they call for indignation. If the tenth part of the imputed crimes of the impeachment have any reality, it would be hard to say what is to be resented or detested, beyond the little pale of selfish resentment, if they are not. We do not wish to sit in judgment on one whom the law has acquitted—it is enough that such charges were not only believed by Mr Burke, but by the deliberate judgment affirmed, [founded on a long, patient, and thorough investigation,] of the House of Commons; nor does it in any way appear on the other hand, that the high court of parliament in which the subsequent impeachment was carried on, came to its contrary decision on any full or competent view of the actual merits of the case. There are crimes sanctioned by custom and unprovided against by human laws. And there were in that case



so large interests involved, as to justify such proceedings as those of Mr Hastings in the eye of the world. These grounds we have already stated; we think that they afford sufficient explanation of the event of the impeachment. We think it just to add, that we by no means go so far as to censure the eventual judgment of parliament. It is hard to convert sanctioned wrongs into delinquency before the bar of human justice. Unquestionably some measures of redress and regulation should precede such crimination. But there was in the alleged conduct of Mr Hastings so very large a departure from all justice, integrity, and humanity, that, if an exception be allowed, it must be in his case.

Mr Burke, strongly possessed with the same sentiments of indignation, honour, and pity, which so strongly pervade all the statements which he had made on the subject of India, and which the matter of those statements could not fail to impress, pledged himself to impeach Mr Hastings so soon as he should return from India. On the return of Mr Hastings, he was reminded in the house of this pledge, and defied to proceed by the friends, and at the desire of Mr Hastings. Mr Hastings was actuated by no consciousness of wrong: early inured to Indian policy, it was in his mind quite consistent with the notions of duty on which he had erroneously, but not, perhaps, with any criminal intent, acted for the benefit of his employers. For all his acts, he was armed with the plea of an established expediency, and of political necessity. He had been publicly thanked and rewarded by the company for the very deeds for which he was now to be called to account. The world was also on his side: his principles of action were those of councils and cabinets. The British empire in India he deemed should not be sacrificed to considerations of mere humanity to the half savages of Hindostan. Thus was each party strong in the sense of right—the one burning to vindicate the laws of society, the principles of justice and mercy, and to redress the wrongs of a large division of the human race; the other to whose habits such notions were altogether foreign, felt himself on the sure ground of his duties—his great services to the empire, and the practical impressions of mankind.

Thus, it will be understood, that the charges against Mr Hastings did not originate with Mr Burke, but were founded on the well-considered and deliberate report of a most competent committee appointed in the House of Commons:—that the acts were such as to call for the charges; that Mr Burke was of a character to be strongly alive to the tortuous character of such acts; the menace of impeachment was the natural consequence: to this impeachment he was defied. The rest of the train will seem equally the clear result of a controlling succession of incidents; and, on Mr Burke's part, not to be avoided. The following extract is Mr Burke's own reply to the unwarrantable charge of malice. We give it from an imperfect report:—"He disclaimed every feeling of personal pique or aversion. Mr Hastings had never injured or offended him. He possessed many qualities, of which he was as ready as any man to avow his admiration. He entered on the select committee with such a manifest partiality for this man, that the friends of Sir Elijah Impey often upbraided him for the prejudice



which they thought he entertained in his favour. He had been, like many of his betters, dazzled with the constant panegyrics which attended the mention of his name. But the huge volumes of evidence which came under his inspection effected a complete revolution in all his ideas of this celebrated character. The inquiries, which he thought it his duty to make, were laborious, and he soon foresaw would certainly subject him to a world of obloquy and invidious remark. He persevered, however; and what was the result? He found that plunder, murder, and desolation had been systematically pursued—that the policy of India aimed only at rapacity—that no means, however foul and atrocious, which could facilitate this end were omitted—and that the perpetrators of all these enormities, instead of being called to an account for their actions, were supported, protected, and cherished by those whose duty it was to prosecute and punish them. He could not, therefore, but look upon Mr Hastings as the scourge of India. It was his duty, and the duty of every man who thought and felt as he did, to deliver, if possible, any part of God's creation from such a scourge. His efforts he found were much too weak, though as strong as he could make them.

Five years had been spent by Mr Burke in deep and laborious investigations, and in "brooding over" the wrongs of India; when, in 1786, he brought forward the subject explicitly, in a motion for inquiry, on February 17th in this year. Having been formally called upon by major Scott to produce his charges in a parliamentary form, Mr Burke commenced by calling the attention of the house to its own resolutions upon the same subject in 1782. He then rose, and went into a full and accurate sketch of the history of India from 1764; having described the rapid growth of all the varied corruptions and malpractices already noticed in our previous pages, he mentioned the formation of the parliamentary committees, which had after the fullest investigation, come to the decision recorded in their journals, and then read to the house. From these had arisen an immense and well-digested body of evidence; and on these he said, that he would rest his accusation of Mr Hastings. Thus, then, was the accusation as fully sustained by all that such an accusation in justice demands, of clear, well scrutinized and digested convictions upon competent inquiry. It wanted only the authority of a court—but nothing of intrinsic competency—to make the decision of those committees as final and decisive as human judgments can be made. No court could have been more competent. And though the defence of the accused is essential to preserve the character of human justice, there are occasions, and this was one, in which so far as the strict question of guilt is concerned, the defence can be of no avail but to avert the sentence. Mr Burke then entered into a discussion of the methods of prosecution usual in such cases, and gave his reasons for preferring the method of procedure by a bill of impeachment. In order to give the greater moderation to this course, he would, he said, commence by moving for papers, and thus institute a searching inquiry; after which, when the matter of charge should appear fully and clearly sufficient to warrant such a course, he would then move for the bill of impeachment.

We have endeavoured to put our reader as briefly as our object would admit, in possession of the preliminary circumstances of the impeachment of Mr Hastings. Were we to go as fully into the subsequent history of the proceedings, it would occupy far more space than we can devote even to Mr Burke. But as we have, we trust, said enough to place the motives of Mr Burke's conduct in their true light, it will, for the rest, be enough to mention the remaining incidents as they come in the order of time. We shall only now observe, that the very detailed and circumstantial memoir written by Mr Prior, contains numerous incidental facts and statements, which when put together, leave no reasonable ground for doubt, as to the actuating motives of Mr Burke throughout every part of the long and trying public duty which he had undertaken,—the evidence to be now derived from his private communications with his most intimate friends; the entire absence of any counterbalancing proofs of any unmanly or malignant sentiment; the honourable and full admissions of the ablest and worthiest of his opponents; the respect and honour freely rendered to his person and character by all persons themselves deserving of respect. These most unequivocal grounds of inference, leave no room for any but the most obstinate and wilful misconstruction of Mr Burke's conduct and actuating motives. Nor, whatever opinion might be formed of Mr Hastings, can the long investigation allow us to admit that there was not full ground for investigation: it is only by very vague insinuations, or by very bold and comprehensive misstatements, that the force can be evaded of those statements which decided the conduct of the House of Commons, and kept the impeachment alive for so many years. Mr Prior tells us that Mr Pitt repeatedly admitted, that the inquiry was "conducted by the right honourable gentleman with every degree of fairness, openness, and candour, of which it was susceptible." He also quotes Mr Mill, the historian of British India, to explain the real causes in which the unpopularity of the trial originated.

The same writer gives some general and just reasons for the odium which began to be cast upon the managers towards the conclusion of the trial. "The favour with which the cause of Mr Hastings was known to be viewed in the highest family in the kingdom, could not be without a powerful effect on a powerful class. The frequency with which decisions and speeches favourable to him were made in the House of Lords—the defence which he received from the great body of the lawyers—the conversation of a multitude of gentlemen from India, who mixed with every part of society—the uncommon industry and skill with which a great number of persons, who openly professed themselves the friends or agents of Mr Hastings, worked through the press, and other channels, upon the public mind; and not least, the disfavour which is borne to the exposure of the offences of men in high situations in the bosom of that powerful class of society which furnishes the men by whom these situations are commonly filled; all these circumstances, united to others which are less known, succeeded at last in making it a kind of fashion to take part with Mr Hastings, and to rail against his accusers."\*

\* Mill's History of British India.

We cannot omit the following remarks. "He [Mr Fox] frequently stated that no man but his right honourable friend, could have accomplished the more than Herculean task of the investigation itself, or surmounted the incessant and vexatious difficulties at every step thrown in his way." These difficulties during the trial before the House of Lords were of an extraordinary nature, scarcely a point of evidence being admitted against the prisoner without vexatious quibbles and cavils, discussions and adjournments: and as every one who has attentively perused the history of these proceedings must be aware, it was ultimately by having recourse to the palpable and grossest resources of legal chicanery—such coarse tampering with the *forms* of law, as would not have been sanctioned in any of the regular law courts, that an acquittal was at last obtained. In a word, every art of injustice was employed in behalf of the accused, and every vexatious obstacle opposed to the prosecutors. No reader, perhaps, but a lawyer, will be satisfied with the course of the trial. Few conscientious men will be pleased with the result of it, or the means uniformly resorted to, to evade inquiry into the merits of the transactions themselves, which in the eye of morality, will leave Mr Hastings, if not a guilty man, at least a suspected one; for in the general opinion, as well as in that of an acute historian, (Mr Mill), "if his accusers did not prove his guilt, he himself did not prove his innocence." On this we may remark, that according to these statements, the decided opinion here stated as that of Mr Mill, might be still more decidedly put. Had his accusers simply failed to prove his guilt, he was under no necessity to prove his innocence; but his accusers were not permitted to prove his guilt—and he, with the amplest allowance, favour and opportunity, failed to rebut their charges.

This trial formally commenced on the 25th of January, 1787, and charges were successively brought forward and stated from that date to the 9th of May. Mr Pitt, then at the head of the government, had first begun by resistance; but soon convinced by the weight of the facts, he found himself compelled to take the opposite course; and in fine, he became an assenting party to most of the charges. On the 10th of May, Mr Burke accused Mr Hastings in the name of the Commons, at the bar of the House of Lords.

On the 13th of February, 1788, the proceedings in Westminster Hall commenced with great form. Mr Burke, as the manager, led the procession thither, of the Commons, law officers, Lords, and Royal family. Two days were spent in reading the articles of impeachment, and the answers of Mr Hastings. On the third, Mr Burke opened the case to a crowded house. For four days, he continued a statement of unparalleled power and effect: whether from the force of representation and reason—the command of the subject—the novel aspect in which he presented questions already so trite and beaten, or the profound interest of the facts themselves, never perhaps was so large and respectable an auditory so bound by the commanding mastery of an orator. Some indeed of the statements which he made, on the 18th of February, were of a nature to convulse the feelings of the house with horror. Mr Burke was compelled by his own emotion to pause, and drop his head upon his hands, and remain for some moments unable to



articulate—nor did he proceed many minutes after, before he was seized with a violent cramp in the stomach, when the proceedings were in consequence adjourned till the next day. It was on this occasion that Mrs Siddons and some other ladies fainted, at the horrible narrations of the orator. On the 19th, he closed his statement with a solemn and impressive description of the cause, the accusers, and the court; and ended by charging Mr Hastings with abuse of public trust—with dishonouring the character of England—of subverting the laws, rights, and liberties of India—of destroying the properties of the inhabitants—desolating their country—and of enormous cruelties and tyrannies inflicted on persons of every rank and sex. On the 21st of April, the business of the trial was, after some adjournments, resumed; and Mr Burke brought forward his first separate charge, which was that of bribery; from which this trial went on with great interruptions, through several years. A distinct statement of the several charges would convey little to the reader, without much detail for which we have not room in this necessarily restricted memoir. We have nevertheless endeavoured to include in the foregoing select statements, the general merits of the whole question. As we have been enabled to estimate it from the comparison of several historians, biographers, and contemporary papers; and as we should argue them in detail, the view we have endeavoured to communicate may be summed in a few words. We consider that Mr Hastings is liable to the general charge of an unprincipled and tortuous policy, and acquit him of criminal motives. We believe, upon a perusal of the opposite statements on either side, that most corrupt and unconstitutional means were adopted to screen him from the consequences of the impeachment; and we also consider that many were biassed in his favour, by a sense of the hardship of his being rendered criminal for a system of efficient and apparently indispensable policy, pursued according to the dictates of judgment, and of a sense of duty. The common feeling of the world undoubtedly places expediency above right. A juster sense is revolted by the apparent creation of new crimes, and by an undefined criminal equity. But it is indeed evident that there must be cases of the abuse of great and peculiar powers, which cannot be anticipated by legislation; and that there must be limits to conventional abuses. It is perhaps for such cases that the highest court in the realm, and the trial by impeachment should be the remedy. Here, if anywhere, should be supposed to reside an equity more comprehensive and elementary than the special pleadings and narrow precedents of chancery courts. And the most remarkable aspect of the subject is, the fatal proof which it affords of the utter inefficiency of such a jurisdiction. Without assuming the guilt of Mr Hastings, it would be an easy task to prove that he was not acquitted upon the merits of the case.

During the continuance of this procedure, Mr Burke found time to take a very distinguished part in many public questions. On some of those occasions, he obtained from contemporary writers his usual meed of distinguished notice.

In 1786, he paid a visit to Ireland in company with his son: it was the last time he visited his friends in Balitore, who received him with deep and affectionate enthusiasm. At this time his visit to Ireland

excited a very general sensation, and was variously celebrated in prose and verse.

In the following year he was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy, thus adding his name to a roll now enriched with the highest names which adorn the records of science and literature. It was in the same year that he was celebrated in an eloquent tribute by Dr Parr in his preface to *Bellendenus*. Parr was among his most zealous admirers, until the part taken by Mr Burke, respecting France, alienated his regard.

The Regency question, which occurred in 1788, occupied Mr Burke's attention for several months. The illness and subsequent absence of Mr Fox threw the principal conduct of the opposition on him. We only advert to so well-known an incident to mention one circumstance connected with Mr Burke. Little in habits of intimacy with the heir-apparent, whose amusements and associates were not generally such at that time as to have much attraction for him, his active and industrious energy, as leading advocate in the prince's case, did not lessen the interval that separated him from the circle of Carlton house. But an exigency arose that brought his talent and judgment into request, in such a manner as to indicate strongly the sense entertained of him among the best judges of those qualities which the occasion called for. Mr Pitt, in December, 1781, addressed a letter to the prince on the subject of his claim to the regency. It was a letter in a high degree vexatious to the prince's feelings, and such as to cause much anxiety and embarrassment as to the reply proper to be sent. It was plain to the prince, and all his more immediate advisers, that a suitable reply must demand an unusual degree of address, discretion, and tact. Much caution would be required to avoid committing the prince before the public, and it was a nice and delicate consideration to keep clear of dangerous allusions, and maintain a due degree of that frankness which the dignity of the prince's station should be supposed to dictate. As Mr Prior informs us, the party at once cast their eyes on Mr Burke. The letter he wrote on the occasion has obtained celebrity as a model of such compositions. It fully satisfied the prince and his advisers, whose probable motives for the selection are thus stated by Mr Prior:—"In his hands it would be sure to acquire the requisite vigour, information, and address, necessary for the occasion; the heat which occasionally attended him in debate was known to be almost wholly discarded from his compositions in the closet." This letter is given by Mr Prior, and several other writers, but it is too long for our insertion.

But we must here omit all notice of the numerous minor incidents of the day, to come to the last great division of Mr Burke's public history. It is not by events of local or partial interest, or of a transitory effect on the destinies of England, or perhaps in the records of the human race, that the fame of Mr Burke ought to be weighed. The history of the American war, of the trial of Mr Hastings, which was the first stone of a future world in the East, are comparatively small and local. Nor should we have loitered to dwell upon them at a length incommensurate with their present interest, but for the mix-



ture of shallow error and party slander which pursued Mr Burke's conduct through these and subsequent events, for the purpose of charging him with political inconsistency. This is a charge commonly pursued beyond the limit of common sense; but, with regard to Mr Burke, it is altogether without foundation. The consideration is indeed most especially worth the intelligent reader's best attention; it casts a broad light upon the pernicious conventions of party feeling in every age. There is nothing which more clearly illustrates the want of sound and extensive comprehension of great public questions, than the common habit of estimating or governing the conduct and opinions by party. It is quite unnecessary for us to digress upon the real advantages of party as an important means to an important end. But men in this, as in all other things, lose sight of the end in the means; even their best wisdom is too commonly propped by prejudice. Thus it is that, principles being lost sight of, the essential distinctions of questions are confounded, and they are classed by their accidents. Unquestionably, if distinctions founded on principle may be excluded and party conventions assumed as rules of reason, then, in all possible collisions between the government and the governed, one side should be adopted, *as consistent*, without any respect to the nature of the questions involved; if an insurrection for Simnel or Warbeck is to be justified (for this too would follow), by the same arguments as the Revolution of 1688: it must be freely admitted that every statesman who would maintain the just rights of a nation, must with the same zeal support the most wild extreme of popular crime and frenzy. The admission, and it is too often involved in party language, wholly eliminates all questions as to distinction, all resorts to principle. If however, the opposite maxims be adopted, and it be once allowed that in the award of opinion the case is to be considered in itself; if it be allowed that a statesman is to look to right, justice, and sound expediency, and preserve his principles even amid the shifting quicksands of a changing party, we must arrive at a very different position, and view the conduct of the statesman in a very opposite aspect. Some years since, there were in existence in some parts of Ireland, certain petty courts of feudal origin, in which suits were generally preferred by a very low class of persons for small charges or claims; whenever any reputable person chanced unhappily to be concerned in these courts, it was mostly as defendant. The case was tried by a jury composed of those who were the customary plaintiffs; when it came on, it was no unusual incident to see the plaintiff start from the empannelled twelve, and come forward with his charge; but under all circumstances, the judgment of the bench (no King's bench but a plain side-stool of office), and the verdict of the jury were overawed by a ferocious crowd, as well as swayed aside by the petty interests which were understood to prevail. Judgment was uniformly given for the plaintiff, unless he chanced to be a respectable person, and an extern to the court. The legal practitioners of these miserable dens of iniquity were in the habit of defending their perverted practice against the frequent charges of perversion, by saying that these were "the people's courts." This is precisely identical with the consistency of Mr Burke's accusers. The spirit of the popular men of



every generation with which history has yet made us acquainted, has not been a liberal zeal for right, equal law, constitutional freedom; but, losing sight of these great fundamental elements, they have most commonly in all their language and proceedings, strongly manifested, and often directly professed the plain simple deference to popular will as their primary principle. This is evidently in part a consequence of the natural illusion arising from habit—from the common error of inferring the principle of conduct from the conduct itself instead of the opposite and right course; thus from the mere ignorance of most party men, the spirit of the party falls into the place of principles. It must indeed be admitted that in this fallacy there is also no small mixture of worldly craft; for undoubtedly the conciliation of popularity is a vast element of party or personal influence. These reflections are made with a view to point out, as distinctly as we can, that which we consider as the true cause of the charge against Mr Burke's consistency at this period of his life on which we are now to enter. His opponents have, unconsciously, advanced charges, which imply the principle of their own conduct or opinions, to be mere simple adhesion to popular opinion. If the people were to change in a few years to the most contrary wishes, the statesman who can trim his courses accordingly, will seldom be charged either with inconsistency; nor will it be thought necessary to find tortuous motives for his real change. But the actual cases with which we have to deal are better marked and offer the best illustrations. The changes of spirit in Mr Burke's party are well marked; it is easy to vindicate the Rockingham party on the principles of the constitution—the party of Mr Fox cannot have the advantage of such a vindication. It would be no difficult task to vindicate the revolution of the North American states, on the common principles of national rights; the French Revolution admits of no such defence. But, however it may be defended, the cases are not similar; they offer widely different questions, to be referred to different principles. Their common element of popularity is in no way involved in these questions.

The first incidents of the French Revolution were well adapted to impose on the profoundest human understanding. And even while its advance was accompanied by indications less equivocal, still there was much to conceal tendencies, not then so fully understood as they subsequently were, when seen by the light of events. The stern and unequal pressure of an ancient feudal monarchy, which had long survived the times to which it was appropriate, and the degree of social advance which produced and required it, was no longer commensurate with the enlarged system of knowledge, trade, and human civilization, which had grown up in France. A large and respectable middle class had come into being, with no suitable rights or place in the scale of order. The peasantry had followed the onward wave; and, universally, there was an advanced maturity of the public mind and spirit, which demanded, and must, sooner or later, by some means, have obtained large and suitable relaxations of the old system. This was felt by all who were acquainted with even the lowest rudiments of national polity. Every wise and good man in the surrounding states could not fail to look with interest on any signs of such important

ameliorations. In France, itself, this was not so decidedly the feeling among the higher orders, from the common reluctance to part with privileges, or approximate ranks—a sentiment powerfully affecting man's nature. The mere possession of such badges of social pre-eminence, tends, indeed, to fill the mind with prejudices unfavourable to improvement. It is also a task of superhuman power, to dissolve and recompose a state of things; and, in France, the grievances of the people were diffusively involved in the entire system of their laws and customs. A vicious constitution was maintained by the deep and solid ramparts and buttresses of antiquity. In this condition of things, we would say, that the demand for improvement was generally felt: while the law of social progress, the essential means to be employed, and the urgent and vital necessity for caution (not even now clearly comprehended) was totally unknown.

Consequently, at the first appearance of changes which appeared to tend to good, there was a strong sympathy awakened in England, in which Mr Burke participated. Let us see what were the facts which were present to his observation. First, the grinding and oppressive powers of the monarchy were practically alleviated by a most virtuous and enlightened monarch, who loved and deserved the love of his people; and it was a consequence that the ameliorations first appeared to come from the only quarter from which beneficial changes can come, consistently with order and safety. There were, it is true, other moving causes at work; such as to alter the whole process of improvement, and to turn into a rapid disease the slow workings of constitutional growth. But of these, nearly all were as yet separate and independent incidents and workings, quite unconnected with the great movement into which they were presently to coalesce and precipitate. To the apprehension of Mr Burke, there appeared an enlightened king, aided by wise, liberal, and provident counsellors, working for the good of a great nation, and more disposed to concede liberties, and suppress odious encroachments, than any of their predecessors. The king's readiness to yield, exaggerated by remoteness, seemed to offer the most fitting occasion for reforms, not otherwise to be attained but with danger; and the first movements of a revolutionary character were more viewed as a pressure sufficient to overcome the obstacles arising from an established regime. The financial embarrassments which were to give the immediate impulse to the long concentrating elements of civil ruin were but little known in England. And the fatal influence of an insane philosophy, of which it was the tendency to unhumanize the heart—to break down all restraints, and exalt all vices, was not yet seen in connexion with events. It was not then understood how a radical demoralization was to unfit the French people to hold the liberty which seemed just within their grasp, and to give a fiendlike complexion and form to that strange people—marking every onward step with a wilder and more abandoned frenzy till a deadlier slavery than was till then known to history, became the only remedy for their utter disorganization. It was only in its progress that such a wild anomaly could be appreciated. The revolutions of England moderated by the real virtue, the sobriety, the constitutional sense, and above all, the christian character of Great Britain, were the actual



precedents in the minds of Englishmen, they looked to the whigs of 1688, and did not see how widely distinct in spirit and character were the actors.

It was thus that Mr Burke, making the seemingly just allowance for professed intentions, for the actual tendencies of events, and not aware of the yet concealed conditions of the great problem then to be practically solved, went no further at first than others, the wisest of his party, in discerning what was to follow. It is, indeed, an inconsiderate mistake, to set him down as simply the opponent of the French Revolution: it was the principles by which it was conducted, and the atrocities in which it was quickly merged that elicited his indignation and roused his chivalric humanity. These were the first objects of his active and effective denunciations—the most honourable of his illustrious acts, which turned off the fell infection from England, for at least his own and the following generation.

Against the actual spirit of the French Revolution, (the dispositions by which—however originated—it was really characterized and modified towards its end,) Mr Burke had early expressed his strong protest: but for a considerable interval after the first manifestation of these dispositions, they had not yet taken a political form; nor were they, in principle, involved in any of the great public questions by which his mind was engrossed. And so it happened, that the expressions of his opinion were confined to private intercourse, and the less direct allusions of casual observation. From his first visits to France, he noticed the unprincipled philosophy, and the moral contamination which were rapidly diffusing themselves through every circle: his remarks, which were of course but casual, we have already taken due care to notice in their order. At the actual period of this narrative, Mr Burke, in common with Mr Fox, Pitt, Wilberforce, and most wise men of his time, looked with satisfaction and sympathy on movements of progress which, abstractedly considered, were truly to be desired. It yet only appeared that despotism was relaxing its grasp, and that abject slavishness of spirit was changing its character, and lifting its head from voluntary prostration: it seemed, too, to be eminently the undertaking of rational and philanthropic wisdom, countenanced by authority, and conducted by legal means. The intrinsic and entire absence of all the vital principles of social order had not been yet indicated by outward signs: the scheming demagogue, the licentious depredator, and the abandoned infidel, had as yet availed themselves but of the ordinary pretexts of recognised good and evil, which they are mostly compelled to use for the purpose of drawing in the common sense of the crowd. But Mr Burke was not long in the obscurity which held other statesmen: he quickly began to see consequences. The following passage from a letter to lord Charlemont, was written immediately after the first indication which he could well have observed; and it is remarkable for the prophetic outline of following events, which it so distinctly conveys in a few words:—"As to us here, our thoughts of everything at home are suspended by our astonishment at the wonderful spectacle which is exhibited in a neighbouring and rival country. What spectators, and what actors! England gazing with astonishment on a French struggle for liberty, and not knowing whether to blame or applaud.



“The thing, indeed—though I thought I saw something like it in progress for several years—has still somewhat in it paradoxical and mysterious. The spirit it is impossible not to admire; but the old Parisian ferocity has broken out in a shocking manner. It is true, that this may be no more than a sudden explosion; if so, no indication can be taken from it; but if it should be *character rather than accident, then that people are not fit for liberty, and must have a strong hand, like that of their former masters, to coerce them.*” Assuredly these few sentences disclose many things. They illustrate our foregoing estimate of the small knowledge which then existed of the precise state of things in France. But they also show that while others knew little of the facts, and not more of the working of tendencies, which were to give the turn to events, he directed his thoughts according to those just and true grounds of judgment, which afterwards governed his conduct, and in strict accordance, even to the letter, with events. His opinion was yet conditional, but not the less rigidly just.

Considerably later than the period of the letter here quoted from, when the Revolution had made great advances, and manifested with no small distinctness the real tendency of its progress, it is known that still there was generally no just sense entertained in England of its character and its actions. It was yet thought that the excesses of every kind which had already disgraced every step of it, were but the ebullition of natural enthusiasm, attendant on such a wonderful and happy liberation from the crushing thralldom of centuries; and that when the wise counsels from which a sound polity was to proceed had fully done their part, that the people and their agitators might be expected to subside into order. Mr Fox and his associates, most of whom we must suppose to have been to a great extent sincere, had not appreciated the rabid fever of the Celtic blood which flowed, and flows, so purely in the veins of Gaul. Mr Burke's mind was evidently possessed with a strong sense of the nature of that people. There is a prepossession of the higher intelligence, which goes before the apprehensions of slow reasoning, and this appears to gleam through Mr Burke's language, with a deep fulness which time has interpreted. He was evidently hesitating toward right views, when all around him were confident in the wrong. He exerted his usual industry as well as his intelligence on the subject, and endeavoured to draw information from numerous correspondents in France.

Towards the end of September, in 1789, one of these correspondents, M. de Menonville, a member of the National Assembly, wrote to learn Mr Burke's opinion of French affairs, and received an answer which leaves no doubt as to his views, or as to the course he would himself take. He gives a forcible portraiture of the conduct of the French, and says, “To men so degraded, a state of strong constraint is a sort of necessary substitute for freedom; since, bad as it is, it may deliver them in some measure from the worst of all slavery.” He then proceeds to describe his notion of true civil liberty. “You have kindly said that you began to love freedom from your intercourse with me. Permit me, then, to continue our conversation, and to tell you what the freedom is which I love. It is not solitary, unconnected, individual selfish liberty. It is *social* freedom. It is a state of things

in which no man or body of men is in a condition to trespass on the liberty of any person, or any description of persons in society. This kind of liberty is, indeed, but another name for *justice ascertained* by wise laws, and secured by well-constructed institutions." This definition of the social state in its only complete form—combining all that social institutions have for their object—demands well the careful attention of the people and their advisers of every time: precisely because it offers the true correction to the common prejudice which, for reasons easy to apprehend, is ever liable to be renewed among the ignorant, and fostered by the designing. It was the distinctive principle of all Mr Burke's conduct—he was the ardent champion of liberty in the sense thus defined, and the resolute opponent of the spurious, because unregulated, freedom excluded by his definition and opposed to true liberty. His comment has the merit also of closely describing the real and essential process of all revolutions founded on popular license; and, while it describes the French Revolution, is of universal application. Let us for a moment give expansion to so important a statement.

We have but to conceive a populace as ignorant as the lower orders of every nation have hitherto, with few exceptions, been, to exist under any form of despotic and oppressive government. By slow degrees, in the course of time, from whatever cause—for the cause is here indifferent—either the patriot or the demagogue—for this too does not concern the proposition to distinguish—commences the work of reform and redress. The cry of liberty begins as a word of course, and by degrees the popular mind takes fire. It is at this point that our question begins. The popular notion of liberty excludes refinement and theory—it has no science, and does not look to consequences. It is simply that every man may do as he pleases without any constraint. The absurdity is variously concealed: it never occurs that this pleasure will not be according to certain simple notions of fitness and right. Few people are without their notions of right: with such all public courses of action begin; they are the natural beginnings of all self-delusion; they are from beginning to end the masks of all public imposture and crime. Great wrongs are easily discovered—and the pretexts of public virtue demand small ingenuity to find them; the varnish of patriotism can be wanting to no design; but we may here assume the best intentions, for it is the instrument and the manner we have to consider. The demagogue may be a patriot—the populace may be moved by well-grounded complaints. But in the multitude are many elements, and all soon mingle in the igniting mass of public passions. There is the simple, fervent crowd, fired by an exaggerated sense of wrongs; there are the profligate, and the adventurous; there are the ambitious and the artful; there is designing talent, and there is shallow and misguided speculation. Flippant and superficial maxims, which sound well to the vulgar ear, because they convey the vulgar sense, soon imbody and give substance and *unity* to popular sentiment; and slowly but surely the flame thus gathered, breaks into fierce combustion. The populace thus enter with their passions into the cry; and though it may even begin in right, it is likely to take a different course from



the host of bad and powerful spirits which popular enthusiasm thus brings in.

So far the swell of the fiery tempest is to be traced. But another process is at the same time, and by the same movements, obtaining a retributive energy. Each individual, as he is ready to attribute the best intentions to the crowd, and to imagine that (he knows not how) all will be for the best, also is possessed with a sense of the invincible power of the multitude. He is not aware of the moral and intellectual operations by which that power can be governed or paralyzed. It never can occur to him that the aggregate of wills and passions can have an operation different from the unit, by which the unit may become the sport or the thrall. He cannot imagine how the mighty mass of ardent passions and physical power can become the plaything of the very leaders it has itself set up. He lends his whole force, and all his passions, to the mighty pressure in which his powers of individual motion are to be paralyzed, for every purpose but the will which rules the mass itself. He is a slave, and perhaps a victim; nor is there any possibility of avoiding his fate. It cannot be otherwise; there is no instrumentality in the popular will or wisdom, for the institutions of order, justice, or civil liberty. They can be roused into irresistible action by the excitement of passions which bring all the vices of human nature in their train. But after the commission of countless acts of insanity and wickedness, they are still bound by the laws of nature—an iron necessity controls the fierce and fiery tide, and slavery is the sure reaction of license.

Of all this, instances enough are to be found; but the most perfect and the least confused, with the interposition of modifying phenomena, is the example of France. As Mr Burke has truly observed, this is the only complete case of revolution which history offers. Happily, in most instances, there are modifying circumstances or interposing causes, which either moderate from the beginning, or interrupt and overrule the course of this great social distemper. In most cases, the causes of the morbid action have been deficient, or the preservative forces—the *vis medicatrix*—of the social state too strong; or as in some of the lesser states, the external pressure too controlling. In France, the yoke of feudal slavery had been contentedly borne by a people vain enough to be proud even of their chains: the growth of civilization had silently but effectually ameliorated and softened the condition of every class, and a good king, against whom there is no charge but want of timely resistance, was in all things advancing the work of amelioration, to the utmost extent that the exigencies of the kingdom at the time permitted. By no revolutionary change, the despotism of Louis XIV. had in some way disappeared; and there cannot be a better illustration of this, than the fact which transpired on the taking of the Bastile. This ancient prison, of which the very name for ages had been a word of terror, not inferior to that of the Inquisition, was then found to have become a common jail for debtors, and for persons legally sentenced for real crimes. The whole number amounted to seven. But Louis was placed under vast and insurmountable difficulties by the improvidence, the crimes, and the remissness of his predecessors; and a contest with his parliament, in which



much, could we afford space, might be said for and against both parties, terminated in the excitement of the national passions. The Deputies had recourse to representations of a popular nature, and the people of Paris were roused into a dangerous sympathy. In France, Paris is the seat of the national will, and the mind of the citizen might be enough to consider. Unhappily the time was charged with a spirit of intellectual revolt; the frenzy of the rabid Parisian would have subsided; but more potent spirits were at work, and a systematic agitation caught up, kept alive, and diffused the fiery impulse. Of this we have already spoken, but somewhat more is required.

When popular movements are, from whatever cause, excited into action, the extent, energy, and effectiveness of this action will altogether depend on the number and character of the agitators. Whether their discontent be serious or light, spurious or legitimate, the mere populace moves but a little way, and quickly subsides. The people may commit robberies on a larger scale, but insurrection in any of its regular forms is something above them. Yet, on all occasions of sufficient extent and magnitude, there is never wanting enough of this essential element to render such excitements formidable. But in France, a vast wave of intellect, powerful and overflowing as it was, disordered and laden with elements of disaster, came rushing on the age *simultaneously* with the disorders of the State. The causes which we have already enumerated formed but the surface of the commotion. In Paris, every circle, however obscure, was illuminated by some portentous philosophy. Voltaire's wit and infidelity, Rousseau's theoretical and sentimental insanity, are but mere familiar types of a thousand followers, rivals, and colleagues, hardly less brilliant, and nothing less effective in their spheres; their folly, madness, atheism, had a favourable soil to spread in, the mixed levity and morbid excitability of Paris became saturated with a licentious philosophy of universal abnegation. The Economists, of whom the leading names are justly the subject of permanent praise as the founders of political economy, had naturally enough diffused a taste for their science through every educated rank, and, however reputable in itself, it became combined with every folly. The whole mass thus leavened became one; and dreams of political regeneration, more false and impracticable than ever poet dreamed, became the earnest working speculation of educated and polished society. The confined and partial method of reasoning which has been so lavished upon this topic, renders it necessary to be careful in the statement of such views. It is to be admitted that there was an abundant display of specious maxims of truth and equity on the surface, and it was easy for those, and they were many, who enlisted their tongues or pens on the popular side, to dress their opinions in such a light as to impose on the ignorant as they imposed on themselves. It is admitted that there did exist a strong case for reform and redress; it was easy to find matter for sounder arguments than were employed. But neither the proximate impulses nor the actual contest at all resembled the equitable case. It was easy for those who would abolish social order to declaim against tyranny, which, in point of fact, did not exist. It was easy for the lawless to clamour against the inequalities of law.

We would not be understood to disallow any of the strong primary claims which, looked on abstractedly, would seem to call for revolution. But we must protest against the undiscerning and vague language, offensive to reason, which overlooks the whole chain of actual events, to moot abstract points which the writers uniformly misstate. Those able men to whom the world is indebted for the first elements of political economy, are to be exonerated from a *direct* concern in the crimes and follies of the Revolution; but they were, it is to be observed, enlightened themselves but partially, and in various degrees; and they were but the nucleus to a vapoury train of political enthusiasts. The praise of wisdom or prudence stops perhaps with Turgot. Whatever wise men might have done, the Revolution was the handiwork of madness, vice, and folly, after the first moving impulse given by the parliament of Paris. In their usurping, infatuated, and mob-ridden assemblies, from the Notables to the atrocious Jacobins and Cordeliers, or the fell dictatorship of Robespierre, whatever truth was spoken, or honesty shown, was the occasional protest of some sturdy opponent, like Maury, whose adventurous eloquence reminds the reader of Abdiel reproving the associate fiends.

The eulogists of the French Revolution in that day, and in the present, are equally remarkable for a disregard of events. But they were also, and are still, open to the far graver charge of the same want of principle—the atheism directly involved in all their insane visions of human perfectability—the perversion of science involved in the notion that a whole social system can be annihilated and reconstructed by any human power. Against such charlatanerie and fanaticism, the noble stand made by Mr Burke can hardly be viewed by liberalist understandings as otherwise than a narrow bigotry. The French Revolution, reduced to its facts and to its own actually professed principles, will be found standing on a brief and simple negation of all recognised principles and truths:—That there is no God—that the will of the multitude is the source of right and law—that every one has the right to act according to his own will. This simple creed was faithfully adhered to, which, in its essential tendency, includes both the extremes of license and oppression.

In England, the same spirit was rapidly beginning to diffuse its baleful exhalations. The reasonings of the modern philosophy had a charm for the shallow, on whom it conferred newborn wisdom; on the profligate, whom it restored to the dignity of an easy virtue. If atheism was wanting, deism had then an ample spread in England, and answered all the same purpose: for, pure theism involves no practical principle, and is not a religion, but a philosophy, on the same level with all the other metaphysical systems ever known; that is to say, entirely nugatory. Nor was deism merely prevalent in its own proper form—it was largely disguised in that of Socinianism, a form of natural religion masked under the name, but denying both the principles and doctrines of Christianity. From the same tendencies and opinions with both of these, there grew up in England a lax republicanism, which caught flame from the disorders of France. The effect was considerable in extent, and deep and permanent in the hold it took of the popular intellect; for such diseases have a tendency to spread, and



are too congenial to the human mind to fail in effecting wide alterations. Resting on abnegations, they are easy to the understanding; dissolving restraints—levelling inequalities—dethroning conscience, they flatter the pride, ambition, and passions, of the breast. They all set out with the assumption of all knowledge being founded on abstractions—all power derived from an imaginary consent of an imaginary public—all social institutions from some primary state of nature. It was easy to invent a Deity, a religion, and a civil polity, consequent on such a beginning, and adapted to return to it in theory. Thus it was that these illusions, seemingly unconnected, went hand in hand; and thus ever since have they been combined in their developments.\* These causes operated for the moment, as usual, on the popular mass, ignorant in principle, and open to the contagion of every new impulse in the direction of their natural tendencies. They had a more formidable and permanent operation in their effect upon the whigs. Among these, the ignorant, the superficial, the visionary and the heated, became more or less converts to opinions of which the fallacy lay beyond their intellectual scope, and of which the impracticability had not been yet exposed by consequences; while a few more able, but also more ambitious, were ready to avail themselves to any extent of the spirit of the hour.

The moment had at length fully arrived when, to a mind strongly cast and zealous in its decided bent like that of Mr Burke, it was altogether impossible to remain silent. Deeply roused by the current of perilous fallacies which were violently opposed to all he believed and all he knew, it would have been irreconcilable with his character and principles to remain a passive and acquiescent drudge to a party which had first abandoned himself, and then shot madly from its sphere into the maintenance of tenets foreign from all sober and constitutional wisdom. The real results of the French Revolution were become discernible, and it required nothing of that prophetic sagacity for which Mr Burke has been complimented, to see what was to be the end. Priestley, Paine, and Price, men of extraordinary acuteness, subtlety, and powers of popular address, deists and Socinians, and having all the vices and fallacies of the populace on their side, were engaged in spreading wide the contagion. Lesser luminaries of sedition and irreligion were not wanting wherever there was popular credulity; clubs of democrats and infidels were formed having common feelings and common purposes with the Jacobin club of Paris.

Such demonstrations left no room for misapprehension or compromise; it was no time for men of sound minds and constitutional affections to stand drivelling about freedom and popular rights; the question was too plainly about the laws and the constitution, about license and anarchy. And indeed there is one practical truth worth all that can be said on the subject. When the popular mind becomes thoroughly roused into resistance and self-assertion, it is the height of fatuity to measure the probable result by their opinions, or by any

\* The detailed proof of these reflections would, of course, demand many pages. We only offer them here as the result of our own observation; but we have endeavoured, as much as we could, to shape our statements so as to convey the train of opinion from which we consider them as demonstrable.



consideration of equity or prudence. They will follow their leaders, and these their passions and private motives. A demagogue would set the planet on fire to gain but a pound to his income, or an atom to the weight of his influence.

Mr Burke had also French correspondents who were naturally desirous of his opinion. In his communications with these, his efforts commenced. They were not persons influenced by prejudices hostile to the cause of revolution, from whom misrepresentation of its principles or circumstances might be anticipated. Among the foremost of them was Paine himself, who seems to have omitted no effort to bring over Mr Burke to his own opinions. Others were anxious and observant witnesses, who were in a great measure favourers of the principles, but in some degree alarmed by the incidents which passed under their eyes.

Clearly perceiving that the true limits of remedial reform were already past, and seeing also that false views and unconstitutional tendencies of a popular nature were beginning to spread in England, Mr Burke became alarmed for the possible effects. The most deleterious elements of revolutionary opinion and sentiment found active and powerful sources of propagation in clubs and conventions, under several revolutionary titles, borrowed from the Parisian models, whose language and conduct they adopted and echoed—the Revolution Society, the Constitutional Society, the Club of the 14th of July, &c.; and, to give added power to the alarm of such a state of things, the stain of revolutionary sentiment had obtained a radical hold of the party with which he had been himself connected. In point of fact, this party had undergone a revolution, in the course of some previous years, which it would be hard to explain, without making full allowance for the ordinary effect of time on human things. The early friends and fellow-workers of Mr Burke's early political life had passed away; and others, who had, by the ordinary succession of persons which constitutes the lapse of human life, filled their place, had, from various causes, but most of all from the change of party leaders and combinations of personal character, contracted other predilections and associations. They were no longer the whigs of the American war; but deeply tainted with those maxims and opinions, which we should now describe sufficiently by the modern term "liberalism."

Finding his personal influence with this party entirely insignificant, and his opinions altogether opposed to them on a subject to which all others then appeared comparatively unimportant,—while he was yet unwilling to accede directly to the other great party which was opposed to them—one course alone remained to Mr Burke. Happily for his fame, and happily for England—we might add, for Europe—he could still prove as effective through the press as formerly in the debate. He composed and published a volume which may be best described by the ablest of his opponents. "It is," wrote Mr Mackintosh, "certainly, in every respect, a performance, of which to form a correct estimate, would prove one of the most arduous efforts of critical skill. We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much. Argument, everywhere dexterous and specious, sometimes grave and profound, clothed in the most rich and various imagery, and aided by the most picturesque and

pathetic description, speaks the opulence and the powers of that mind, of which age has neither dimmed the discernment, nor enfeebled the fancy; neither repressed the ardour, nor narrowed the range." After a few strongly worded, but rather vague generalities, Mr Mackintosh proceeds with a generally just and elegant description of the style and manner of the work. "The arrangement of his work is as singular as the matter. Availing himself of all the privileges of epistolary diffusion, in their utmost latitude and laxity, he interrupts, dismisses, and resumes argument at pleasure. His subject is as extensive as political science; his allusions and excursions reach to almost every region of human knowledge. It must be confessed that, in this miscellaneous and desultory warfare, the superiority of a man of genius over common men is infinite. He can cover the most ignominious retreat by a brilliant allusion. He can parade his arguments with a masterly generalship when they are strong. He can escape from an untenable position into a splendid declamation. He can sap the most impregnable conviction by pathos, and put to flight a host of syllogisms with a sneer. Absolved from the laws of vulgar method, he can advance a group of magnificent horrors to make a breach in our hearts, through which the most undisciplined rabble of arguments may enter in triumph."\*

This eloquent, and highly rhetorical passage, while it may be accepted as descriptive of Mr Burke's method, style, and powers, has, beyond this, little truth, and is remarkable for exemplifying in itself some of the artifice it imputes. Of the whole reply of Mr Mackintosh, we should say, that it is liable to far graver charges, were it not that, in no long time after, its author became a convert to Mr Burke, in common with all the more sober portion of his opponents; and, for this reason, it would be unfair to enter into any analysis of the defence. A few words may sufficiently characterize the general error on which this reply, with most of the other writings on the same side, mainly rested. It was that of stripping a vast and complicated question of all its actual conditions, either in fact or principle. The lesser of these two absurdities was that of Mackintosh, who reasons like a lawyer on an assumed state of facts; and thus produces an argument, in itself full of acute observation and correct reasoning; but not comprehending the whole question, and not meeting the arguments to which he aimed to reply. Such an argument received, and that quickly, a substantial refutation from events. The other opponents of Mr Burke mostly took their stand upon those essentially false views of man, and of the social state, which were among the springs of the revolution itself; and from which, however originated, it received its direction, and was governed to its event.

Mr Burke's work produced an effect such as no other political essay ever had, whether for extent or permanent importance. It arrested the violent progress of revolutionary working in England; it at once deprived the clubs of all their more informed and reputable supporters; and paralyzed the more active and dangerous section of the whigs. It was, under Providence, the first and most decisive check to the dis-

\* Defence of the French Revolution, Intro., p. iii, ed. 1791.



organizing influence which was rapidly pervading Europe; and thus, with the aid of subsequent incidents (of which Mr Burke's own subsequent writings were the better part), preserved alive the vital spark of social organization, when it was crushed under the ruins of every other state. The rapid confirmation of his forebodings, and the thorough illustration of his views—so soon afforded by the downfall of religion, civil order, and of liberty itself—gave a solemn and impressive stamp; and an essay, which its antagonist described as comprehending the whole range of political science, was shown to offer the justest views of that science.

On the life of the author himself it had memorable effects. Mr Fox could not help feeling that a resistance so strenuous and effective, emanating from one who had held so prominent a position among the whigs, was dangerous to his own views. All experience had proved Mr Burke to be capable, when roused into effort, of acting with overwhelming zeal against all opposition. This the whole history of his life had made manifest. It was hardly possible that Mr Fox should fail to perceive the schism which was thus sure to be made in his party. But there was at the moment a nearer danger to be apprehended. Mr Fox was, at the same time, under an impression that circumstances had taken place which were favourable to his hopes of office; and he considered it injurious to such an expectation, to be placed in the strong light which the speeches, and, above all, the letters of Mr Burke, had cast, and were casting, upon the conduct and principles of his party. At a moment when it was his obvious policy to maintain a character of moderation and constitutional feeling, all the principles which he had avowed were rendered doubtful; his declarations in praise of the revolution were exposed to a dangerous and obvious interpretation; and he was forced to choose between denying himself, or maintaining opinions which could not well bear the sifting of parliamentary discussion. Mr Fox was strongly alive to those sentiments of friendship and personal respect, which were in him the result of a sanguine temperament, and a cultivated taste. He loved and revered Mr Burke, whose genius and virtues he could well appreciate. But, in the path of ambition, and in the heat of party, such sentiments have no power: they are as flowers cast upon a stream, which may ornament, but cannot stay its course.

In imputing motives and a premeditated conduct to Mr Fox, we would be understood to admit that he does not appear to have been actuated by any low or ungenerous motive; or to have wished to wound the feelings, or even to lower the character, of Mr Burke. Justice demands that we should absolve him from every shade of jealousy, or of any personal ill-will or unkindness. We believe that he sincerely and deeply regretted the pain he thought it necessary to give. And we also think it just to admit, that, although we mainly attribute his whole conduct to ambition and the overwhelming love of popularity, he was himself the dupe of his own false creed in politics. Any one who attentively meditates over his most able speeches, will find room enough for such an admission. The most specious and commanding sophist of modern times could not have been what he pre-eminently was, without much of the rhetorical gift of self-conviction. We can easily give Mr



Fox credit for the sincere adoption of those absurd maxims, which still continue to be occasionally announced in the houses of parliament by his political posterity; and, as a consequence of this admission, we must admit that he is most likely to have been sincere in his worship of the demon of democracy. When he declared the new constitution of the Parisian clubs as "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country," he openly committed his character as a statesman; and cannot be presumed otherwise than in earnest, however we may deny the wisdom or discretion of such a declaration.

But as we have stated, Mr Fox having vainly endeavoured to check the overbearing ardour of his friend, and imputing to his strong exposures of the opinions he advocated, the reproach which was thus reflected on the advocate, he seems, by the best interpretation we can give to the best narratives of the incidents which followed, to have resolved to avail himself of his party influence for the purpose of silencing so dangerous an adversary. The first collision brought on no immediate consequence, but left a strong irritation, and enabled the friends of both parties to foresee the more fierce collision which followed. To this therefore we shall at once proceed, as the shortest course by which we can convey some clear ideas of the whole of this momentous event in our memoir.

During the recess, the friends of Mr Fox were more than usually alert in preparing for the occasion which was now with certainty foreseen by all. Mr Fox himself was industrious in anticipating the objections to his declared opinions, and the prejudices which had been and might still be raised against him, by dexterous explanations, and ready evasions. The most mischievous generalities of political speculation are commonly explicable into conclusions wholly different from the sense in which they are popularly received; because they are mostly either extreme statements of true principles—or received fallacies. Between their general vagueness and equivocal language, the declarations of the most opposite parties may, with slight ingenuity, be brought into a near approach. That which is true in one sense, is received in another; and that which is false in one sense can be defended in another. With this latitude of interpretation, it was easy for the dexterity of Mr Fox to reconcile a language replete with revolutionary purport and influence, with certain abstract assumptions of constitutional science. He could not impose on the understandings of men little less acute than himself; but he could resolve dangerous enunciations into unguarded language, and make it a matter of difficulty to reply, without imputing intents from which courtesy would shrink, and which he might disavow.

In the mean time, Mr Burke was standing quite alone. He was deserted by his party, and refused the alliance of their opponents. He was, however, strong in the simplicity and the clearness of his views, and encouraged by the deep hold which these views had taken of the better portion of the public mind. As it was no part of his intentions to inculcate Mr Fox, he took no steps in opposition to the active efforts of himself and his friends; but, it is rather probable, silently rejoiced that the decided course they were pursuing, would

now, by the exculpation of Mr Fox, leave himself free from the unhappy condition of appearing to assail his principles. For the party of Mr Fox loudly insisted that he had fully explained away all imputation.

On the occasion of the first introduction of the Quebec bill by Mr Pitt, just before the recess, it should be mentioned that Mr Fox made a long speech, into which he introduced a disquisition in praise of what he termed the French constitution; and, it is also necessary to observe, that he had omitted no opportunity for the introduction of this inflammatory topic in a manner which fairly laid him open to the implication, from which at the present moment, he shrunk with so much anxious caution, of entertaining republican opinions. As it was distinctly understood, (and, indeed, a matter of course,) that Mr Burke would now introduce the same topic, and as his representations must necessarily be such, as to place those of Mr Fox in their most objectionable aspect, and this without any express intention of this nature, it became to Mr Fox a consideration of some anxiety to prevent the discussion. He had been led to believe that the king had expressed sentiments favourable to his expectations of office, and that Mr Pitt had endeavoured to counteract this auspicious disposition by suggesting that he entertained strong republican opinions. There was, therefore, in the breast of Mr Fox a strong sense of the expediency of counteracting an impression so utterly fatal to his ambition. Should Mr Burke, with his usual force and vehemence, attack the views which Mr Fox had laid himself under a strong pledge to maintain; it would not only, of necessity, bring into discussion, and place the very statements of Mr Fox on former occasions in a dangerous light; but it would place him also in the false position of defending tenets on which his private policy required that he should be silent. With these convictions, he called on Mr Burke on the morning of the 6th of May—the day appointed for the discussion of the clauses of the Quebec bill. He frankly stated his apprehensions, and it is generally believed on sufficient grounds, his expectations, and the nature of these expectations. But Mr Burke had been too deeply committed on the previous discussion of the same bill; he had allowed Mr Fox to discuss the subject at length without reply; during the recess, he and his opinions had been the theme of abuse, attack, misrepresentation, and all the foul devices of angry factions. Silence would have been interpreted as defeat to himself, and the great cause of which he was the leading champion. And to make the matter the more imperative, it was apparent that no other opportunity was likely to occur. This latter consideration was, on the occasion of Mr Fox's visit, urged by Mr Burke as a reason why he could not accede to his wishes: at the same time, he assured him, that he had no wish to charge him with republicanism, and then stated the plan of the speech he intended to make. Mr Fox appeared content, and they walked arm-in-arm to the house with a common friend, who had accompanied Mr Fox. When the question was put, Mr Burke immediately rose.

We cannot afford space for even the most abridged report of the discussion that ensued, and must endeavour to select such passages as may suffice to illustrate the event as it personally affected Mr Burke.



The purpose of the bill was to make provision for the government of the province of Quebec; and it was not a subject of doubt that it would be made use of to lead to the discussion of the general principles of government, and in consequence to the great questions then uppermost in the public mind. To make this the more obvious, and to account still more clearly for the line of Mr Burke's argument, it is enough to repeat, that such was the line selected by Mr Fox in his previous speech on the 21st of April, when he proposed that the bill should be framed conformably to those alleged principles of genuine freedom which were then beginning to make a rapid progress. To resist such a view, and to counteract the force of such statements, was the immediate intent of Mr Burke; and it will be enough to say, without entering into details which would lead to much repetition, that his speech was essentially a deprecation of revolutionary principles. This had been, of course, foreseen on every side; and the discussion was, from the commencement, marked by a strong sensation. Some of Mr Fox's friends had also already declared their intention of calling any gentleman to order, who should attempt to introduce discussions foreign from the immediate question. That this declaration was meant as the preliminary to an attack on Mr Burke, was perfectly understood at the moment, and now admits of no doubt. Accordingly, Mr Burke was interrupted, in the midst of a very strong, but rigidly true, statement of the condition of the French monarch, by Mr Baker. Mr Burke, after listening with great good temper, defended himself in a few sentences. He vindicated the application of his argument, and was proceeding, when Mr St John again called him to order, and protested against the discussion of the French revolution. Mr Burke proceeded, and said that he would take the sense of the committee, whether he was in order or not. He had not said many words, when a loud outcry of "Order" was set up, accompanied by an equally strong and numerous call of "Go on." Mr Burke observed that there was such an enthusiasm for order, that it was not easy to go on. He again vindicated the design and application of his argument, which he pursued with considerable address, so as to render it difficult to interrupt him without incurring the imputation of opinions, from which all seemed to shrink. The very first moment however, that he again turned to the more general discussion, he was again clamorously interrupted. Mr Burke complained of the proceeding, and was in the course of a very few sentences repeatedly interrupted, all of which he bore with remarkable equanimity. At last lord Sheffield rose, and moved that dissertations on the French constitution, &c., &c., were disorderly on the question then before the house. Mr Fox seconded this motion in a speech of some length.

Up to this period of the debate, Mr Burke received no aid from any of his own party. Mr Pitt, who with some other government members declared that he was in order, endeavoured to prevail on some common friends of both Mr Burke and Mr Fox to interfere. But among the more considerate and respectable of their party, there was a deep conviction of the hazard and delicacy as well as the inutility of any such interposition. It was thought that both were too strongly committed, that each felt too strongly excited, and that the safest way



would be to suffer them to give full and free course to the impulses by which they appeared to be possessed. Mr Fox's speech was such as to be very strongly illustrative of the true intent and spirit of himself and his friends. He lamented the melancholy task of refuting charges unprovoked and wanton; and declared the regret he should feel to lose the friendship of the man to whom he had been indebted for the better part of his knowledge and feelings. He then stated his sense that there existed a plot against him, and that Mr Burke had come prepared, not to debate the clauses before the committee, but to confirm representations of his opinions expressed in a former debate. He next branched out into the praises of the French revolution. He hinted that Mr Burke's pen or tongue derived no honour from the discussion of great events without information; and declared that if he should be permitted to pursue his argument on the French constitution, that he (Mr Fox) would leave the house.

Mr Burke rose to reply to this speech, of which we have only brought together so much as bears reference to the point of contention. He began in a calm and governed tone, and observed that notwithstanding the repeated interruptions he had himself received, that he had listened with the most forbearing attention to Mr Fox. He hoped that the temper suitable to such an emergency would attend him through this painful contention. He noticed that Mr Fox's speech on a question of order had been the most disorderly ever delivered in that house. He then proceeded to observe that his own public conduct and language had been misrepresented, and even his private conversation unfairly brought forward, to convict him of inconsistency. Such was the kindness he had experienced from one whom he had for twenty-two years regarded as his most confidential friend; and who now, without any provocation, had thought it not unfit to commence a personal attack upon him. Having expressed his readiness to meet Mr Fox "hand to hand," and "foot to foot," on the question of the French revolution, he observed that this was, it seemed, not the point of quarrel: he was, he said, accused of introducing the topic to fix a stigma upon certain republican opinions, which Mr Fox was said to have uttered in a former debate. He denied the charge, and then referred to facts already stated in the foregoing pages, to show the improbability of such a design. In a word, he made it as plain as the nature of the charge could admit, that no such intention could exist. He then went on to the discussion of the revolution; after which he reverted to Mr Fox's attack upon himself, and complained of its unfairness, and of the asperity with which it had been conducted. "The right honourable gentleman after having fatigued him with skirmishes of order, which were wonderfully managed by the light infantry of opposition, then brought down upon him the heavy artillery of his own judgment, eloquence and abilities, to overwhelm him." A further allusion to the previous interruptions, in which he called the supporters of Mr Fox "a corps of well-disciplined troops," drew forth a fresh interruption from Mr Grey. An incident which occurred in the course of this speech was supposed to have drawn forth these expressions, and we think may also have tended to add to the excitement which must have been accumulating in Mr Burke's

mind, during the discussion. Mr Fox had previously declared an intention to leave the house, if Mr Burke should be allowed to proceed on the question of France, but having made up his mind to reply, he went to the lobby to procure some refreshment. This movement was mistaken by his friends, who, conceiving that he was quitting the house, immediately to the number of twenty or thirty took up their hats and followed him. Mr Fox returned, and it was probably under a sense of increased exasperation, that Mr Burke proceeded to say that until the present question, no one difference had ever occurred to interrupt their friendship. "It certainly," he said, "was indiscreet at his time of life to provoke enmity, or to give his friends occasion to desert him; yet if his firm and steady adherence to the British constitution placed him in such a dilemma he would risk all." Mr Fox here whispered that there was no loss of friendship. Mr Burke went on to say, that he was sorry there was. "He knew the price of his conduct—he had done his duty at the price of his friend—their friendship was at an end." When, after some concluding observations, Mr Burke sat down, Mr Fox rose to reply: he appeared to labour under the most violent agitation; the tears streamed down his face, and it was some minutes before he could proceed. Great excitement prevailed on both sides of the house.

Mr Fox confessed great obligations to Mr Burke—he noticed their former differences of opinion, and observed that on the present occasion Mr Burke seemed to display more than mere difference of opinion. He appeared to be actuated by a wish to injure him; at least his conduct had such a tendency. He then stated his opinions on the British constitution, and after several just and forcible reflections on this topic, said, that granting his language had been indiscreet on the French revolution, it did not deserve the severe and pointed epithets which had been heaped upon him that day. Mr Burke, on this, said, loud enough to be heard, that he did not recollect having used any. Mr Fox said, if they were out of his right honourable friend's recollection, they were out of his own. He then reasserted Mr Burke's want of information on the affairs of France; but confessed that he had not himself read what had been written on the subject by Paine and Mr Mackintosh—the writings to which Mr Burke had referred, —a strange admission, and one which explains much. Mr Fox then branched out into that thoroughly inconsequent reasoning, which has been ever since the cant of his party and admirers, stating vague truisms and applying them when the application failed; and confounding plain distinctions in such a manner as to have necessarily demanded much patience in an adversary to hear. He also recollected and quoted some conversational remarks and jests of Mr Burke's, of which he made a dexterous, but unfair use. He then proceeded to praise the French revolution, and stated in its defence some reasons from which the strongest objections to it manifestly arose. He then defended himself from the imputation of having instigated the interruptions which had offended Mr Burke; asserting, that though he had been unfairly treated, it should not interfere with his friendship; that he would keep out of the right honourable gentleman's way, until time and reflection had altered his sentiments; when, he doubted not, their common friends



would endeavour to reunite them. And after several further political arguments in his usual strain, he concluded with expressions of regret at the unkindness with which he was now treated, by one from whom he had received numerous favours.

One point of Mr Fox's speech may, as we said, explain much. He had not read many of those writings which offered the main incentives to Mr Burke; and, being to a great extent, unaware of the violent and deleterious sentiments which were pervading the public mind in both countries, and in which really consisted the pernicious tendencies of the French revolution, he had fallen into remarkable misapprehensions. First, he applied to himself the whole force and intent of all Mr Burke's strong denunciations of revolutionary principle and theory, because he was not fully aware of their real direction. Secondly, his own information on the revolution was composed of vague plausibility and untrue statement, obtained from those whose purpose it was to misrepresent it. It is indeed not impossible that a patient perusal of the same books, pamphlets, and journals, from which Mr Burke had, with his usual industry, at this time, made himself master of the entire subject, would have restrained Mr Fox from the impetuous error which marks all his language, and which time has so amply exposed. He reposed in theories and slighted facts, of which he evaded the force by the easy retort of misinformation.

Mr Burke rose, with a firmness which was manifestly the result of much internal effort. He commenced by saying that the tenderness which had been displayed in the beginning and conclusion of Mr Fox's speech, was entirely obliterated by the middle part. He regreted in a tone of earnestness and fervency, the proceedings of that evening, which he feared might long be remembered by their enemies, to the prejudice of both. Under the mask of kindness a new attack had been made upon his character in the most hostile manner, and his very jests brought up in judgment against him. His most inveterate enemy could not have done worse. He had been repeatedly interrupted without being suffered to explain; and accused, without being allowed to defend himself; insomuch, that he was at a loss to understand what was meant either by party or friendship. His arguments, he said, had been misrepresented, as well as all the main events of his political life, to convict him of inconsistency. Upon these, the Economical Reform bill, the American, and some other questions, (already discussed in this memoir,) he dwelt briefly. The inconsistency of his book, with his former writings, had been assumed; but he challenged the proof by specific instances, and asserted that not one syllable of his book, or one step of his conduct, was contrary to the principles of those men with whom our glorious revolution originated, and to whose principles as a whig, he declared an inviolable attachment. "He again stated, still more particularly, the endeavours used in this country to supplant our own, by the introduction of the new French constitution; but he did not believe Mr Fox had now such a wish, and he did believe him to deliver his opinions abstractedly from any reference to this country; yet their effect might be different on those who heard them, and still more on others through misapprehension or misrepresentations. He exposed the grounds upon which



Mr Fox rested his panegyric. The lesson to kings would, he feared, be of a kind opposite to that proposed. He had heard Mr Fox own the king of France to be the best intentioned sovereign in Europe. His good nature had ruined him. He had conceded everything, till he was now in a jail." He then went on to expose the absurdity of praising France for religious toleration. As subsequent events have been such as render any exposure superfluous, we pass his statements on this point. He concluded by saying, that he was sorry for the occurrence of the day, but if it could be of use to any, he was willing to take the evil to himself; he would caution every member of the house against bartering away the advantages of the British constitution for wild and visionary systems which could only lead to confusion and disorder.

The same discussion was revived on the 11th. When the clause on the legislative council was read, Mr Fox rose to oppose it; Mr Fox's speech was, however, cautious, and the sentiments which he expressed free from revolutionary language. Mr Pitt expressed his satisfaction, but observed that his speeches on the former night had conveyed a different impression. Mr Burke, who had in the interval been evidently excited by the comments of the press, and of the friends of Mr Fox, and also by the strong feeling necessarily attendant on a position so new and painful, rose evidently labouring under the influence of such feelings; and in strong terms expressed his sense of the unhappy position he was reduced to. He had served the house and his country for a period of twenty-six years; he had wasted so much of his life to a precious purpose, if that house should at last countenance a most insidious design to ruin him in reputation, and to crown his old age with infamy. He had not been treated with friendship; but, if he was separated from his party; if sentence of banishment were pronounced against him, he hoped to meet a fair open hostility, to which he would oppose himself in a firm manly way, for the very short period he should continue a member of that house. He felt deeply wounded, but, *jam certus eundi, carpebat somnum*. He complained that a plot to make Mr Fox pass for a republican, was imputed to him in a newspaper which he proceeded to read. An attempt was here made to interrupt him; but it was arrested by some more considerate member, and he proceeded on the same subject for a little longer, and then passed on to the French revolution, and applied Milton's description of death to the new republican government, with much effect. He lastly discussed the clause of the bill, and having commented on the arguments of Mr Fox, concluded by some pathetic remarks on his own position.

Mr Fox replied by making several just and conciliatory observations of a general nature, but soon passed into a vein of sarcasm and unwarrantably severe imputation, altogether irreconcilable with any kindness of intention; omitting no disrespect of insinuation, or no keen severity of remark which the occasion admitted, that could wound the feelings of the man or the gentleman. Whether Mr Fox was himself quite conscious of the severity of his language is a question which we would gladly discuss, if our space allowed; but it is a nice and difficult question. There are undoubtedly to be met, and

that not unfrequently, men of great talent and much kindliness of nature, who will trample upon the feelings, and sometimes even on the reputation of their friends, without the least consciousness of the effect they are producing. This may perhaps be best explained by assuming the absence of those feelings which they thus heedlessly assail, and the want of any nicety in the moral sense. Of course we cannot with any confidence venture to apply such a solution to Mr Fox; but may observe, that it can be reconciled with so much of his personal history as has reached us. Of its general justness, experience has convinced us. Amongst other wounding and unfounded insinuations, he hinted that the right honourable gentleman's vanity misled him to attach an undue importance to the personal topics which he had brought before the house. Mr Burke's reply consisted of several strong retorts, into which, not having detailed Mr Fox's remarks, we shall not enter.

This discussion was the end of Mr Burke's friendship with Mr Fox, and his connexion with his party. We have therefore endeavoured to select every point of the discussion, material to this event. Our opinion we have endeavoured to interweave, and have little further to offer on the subject. It should be generally observed, that subsequent events were such as amply to justify the earnest zeal of Mr Burke's conduct: there is no ground for the assumption that it was not sincere, or reason to find wrong motives for that which can be so amply explained on obvious and sufficient grounds. But had not this been the fact, Mr Burke's book had pledged him to the precise line of conduct he pursued, too manifestly, to leave any excuse for the imputations of Mr Fox. — This gentleman was, however, at the moment struggling to hold his own party together, and may be acquitted or excused to some extent on the score of desperation. "He probably feared," observes a contemporary, "lest the schism which was now actually begun, might spread further. He wished therefore to erect the barrier of supposed consistency to stop the secession of others, and to strengthen it, by the terror of punishment to all who should pass it. He endeavoured to establish a bond of indissoluble union against the ministry of Mr Pitt, on the principle of the contest in 1784, and to set that above all other principles. This policy has, however, been ineffectual. A separation followed where Mr Burke had made a crack."\* This writer then observes, that Mr Burke's separation had an earlier origin, which we consider as highly important, and to demand full allowance. In truth Mr Burke's party had died away—they had as he himself said, "gone where he soon must follow, and another party had succeeded with whom he had acted." And we may add, that surely they who accused Mr Burke in the following terms, could not fairly charge him with inconsistency. "The oracle of a great aristocracy, it had been necessary for you to form a creed: and you neglected the *progress of the human mind* subsequent to its adoption." Such is the strongest of testimonies, the unconscious admission of an enemy.† The charge of inconsistency thus retorts itself upon the party which departed from

\* Ann. Register, 1791.

† Parallel between the conduct of Mr Burke and that of Mr Fox.



an old constitutional creed, in conformity with this imaginary progress—but actual disorder—of the times. It is more important to observe, that to this time may be more accurately referred the great crisis of the change which was permanently altering the spirit of the whig party. To describe best in a few words, the principle of this change, it was essentially the adoption of popular will as a fundamental maxim. This is the real result of the French revolution: a maxim which, according to all reason, is purely absurd; but, adopted and carried to its effects, destructive and disorganizing. We should, however, qualify this strong language. This maxim is now applied with much ambiguity. By the leading whig statesmen it is received in a qualified sense; and we have no doubt that if the leaders of the great whig party of our own time were to be pressed for a distinct explanation of their meaning, it would be explained into a conformity with all those constitutional principles, which are utterly inconsistent with its literal sense. But by the lower classes it is literally understood. Hence arises much of the occasional popularity of the whigs. A language which imposes on the public ear, but which cannot be carried out in practice, naturally raises expectation when they are out of power, and produces disappointment when they are in.

The writer last quoted, for the charge of standing still, which he prefers against Mr Burke, gives us a no less curious *pendant* in his picture of Mr Fox's opposite perfection. "Unshackled by the chains of system; at liberty to remark and follow the progress of opinion: and meriting the singular, [singular indeed!] praise of being more near to the level of his age than any professed statesman in Europe." We could not help reading this pithy sentence with the exclamation—Defend us from our friends! Yet the partiality of the writer surely forgot Rousseau, Anacharsis Clootz, and all the statesmen of the Jacobin Club. But it would be indeed unfair to Mr Fox, to associate his name with praise like this: we have only quoted it to illustrate the mixture of falsehood and folly which characterizes the attacks which were then, and long after, so lavished upon Mr Burke's reputation.

As we shall now entirely quit the subjects into which we have thought it our duty to enter, we must request the reader's further attention to a few closing general remarks. The weight of obloquy which has long been poured on this illustrious name, out of all comparison the greatest which his country, or an age fertile in great men has produced, and the little and cold opposition which so much unfair and fallacious notice has called forth, these appear to demand some explanation. One consideration alone will be all-sufficient. Mr Burke had no party. The whigs had left him; and he had not secured the favour of the opposite party. By the higher individuals of both, he was admired, respected, and loved: but it is not by such that the warfare of party malignity is carried on, or the reputation of statesmen set right. During the life, and long after the death of Mr Burke, he was the mark of a low hostility: the fire and force of his public conduct had aroused more than the ordinary animosity of the inferior class of the new whig partisans: some individual enmities added their more concentrated infusion of private rancour. On the other side, the



antagonists of this low class of calumniators, little superior in intelligence, not at all in moral temper, found in the history of Mr Burke, incidents inconsistent with their own party views. So few there are, who can take up an opinion without carrying it to extremes, and maintaining it as a prejudice, that the man who, reasoning from principle, rejects party maxims and holds his course between the errors on either side, can seldom find a champion unshackled enough to defend his memory. Mr Burke was too liberal for the zealot, and too principled for the latitudinarian. Between both, he was suffered to sink far below his proper place in the history of his time. His writings preserved him for better times. But it was not until Mr Prior, with most laudable industry, and with ability proportioned to his zeal, brought together the facts of his life, and placed before the public the whole materials of the great question as to his real merits, that we can be said to have the means of obtaining even a remote approximation to the claim of one who has done more for England, and for posterity, than any other statesman.

The length to which this memoir has been allowed to run is quite disproportioned to our space. But it will be needless to apprise any one who has accompanied us thus far, that we have had, according to our views, no choice. We must endeavour to repair the inconvenience by much restricting some less essential portions of our task. Among others, the remaining personal events of Mr Burke's life demand no lengthened details. We shall despatch them rapidly.

As the French revolution advanced towards its more fatal stages, numerous hordes of emigrants crowded into England. Among these, Mr Burke became an object of great interest. They had seen the experimental illustration of his predictions and reasonings too nearly, not to apprehend his intellectual pre-eminence justly. His efforts to remedy their forlorn state claimed their gratitude. He drew up a public appeal in their behalf,\* which obtained a large subscription. We extract from Mr Prior an interesting account, given by Mr C. Butler, of some of those almost daily levees of Mr Burke to those unfortunate persons at which he was present. "Sometime in the month of August, 1791, the Reminiscent called on that great man, and found him as he usually was at this time surrounded by many of the French nobility, and haranguing with great eloquence on the horrors of the French Revolution, and the general ruin with which it threatened every state in Europe. One of his hearers interrupted him by saying, with somewhat more of levity than suited either the seriousness of the subject, or the earnestness with which Mr Burke was expressing himself—'Mais enfin, Monsieur, quand est a que nous se tournerons dans la France?' '*Jamais*.' was Mr Burke's answer. It was a word of woe: he pronounced it in a very impressive manner, and it evidently appalled the whole audience." After a short silence, during which his mind seemed to be labouring with something too big for utterance, "Messieurs," he exclaimed, "*les fausses esperances ne sont pas une monnoie, que j'ai dans mon tresor: dans la France vous retournerez jamais.*" "Quoi donc," cried one of the audience, "*ces coquins!*" "Coquins!"

\* Mr Prior gives it at full length, pp. 393, ed. 1839.

said Mr Burke, "ils sont coquins; mais ils sont les coquins les plus terribles que la monde a connu." "It is most strange," he then said in the English language—"I fear I am the only person in France or England, who is aware of the extent of the danger with which we are threatened." But, said the Reminiscent, wishing to prolong the very interesting conversation, "the Duke of Brunswick is to set all right." "The Duke of Brunswick!" exclaimed Mr Burke—"The Duke of Brunswick to do any good!—a war of posts, to subdue France!" another silence. "Ce qui me desespere de plus," he said, "est que quand on plâne dans l'hemisphere politique Je ne vois gueres une tete ministerielle a la hauteur des circonstances."

The celebrated Madame de Genlis was at this time among his visitors, and some very curious instances of her singularity are mentioned by Mr Prior. The late Sir W. Smith, then a young man, and in the outset of his honourable career, was at the same time his correspondent, and soon after among his favoured visitors. His account of a visit to Mr Burke remains, and gives a most satisfactory and interesting glance into the domestic life and character of his host; but it cannot without injustice be abridged. It will be found in Mr Prior's memoir.

Excluded from any very efficient line of parliamentary conduct, Mr Burke could not yet refrain from such exertions as the urgent and critical necessity of the times seemed to require. It was evident that all his views and the principles on which they had been formed, were in direct opposition to those of the party of Mr Fox. To waste his time and spirit in vain declamations—and, with the fortune of Cassandra, stand venting idle denunciations of woe in the face of a heedless or scoffing faction, was neither consistent with the real dignity of his character, or with his deep and earnest sense of the emergency. He saw that whatever was to be hoped from any human hand, must come from the government, and that to it strong impressions of salutary fear and indignation had been already communicated. The strong and practical understanding of Mr Pitt—broad and solid—in which clear discernment and masterly reasoning were governed by that all-important quality of sound common sense, so often wanting to men of distinguished talents, and never more so than in his great adversary—had now attained to the ascendancy, which such a character of mind, when not very unfavourably circumstanced, is sure to attain. And the government had become accessible to reasonable views. Mr Burke drew up a paper entitled, "Thoughts on French Affairs," which he offered for their consideration. We here subjoin Mr Prior's summary of its matter, as we cannot offer the same substance more briefly. "He arrives," says Mr Prior, "at these conclusions of which subsequent exposure has taught us the truth—that no counter-revolution in France was to be expected from internal causes only; that the longer the system existed, it would become stronger both within and without; and that while it did exist, it would be the interest of the rulers there to disturb and distract all other governments."

Mr Burke had also the consolation of finding that his reasonings had pervaded Europe, and made strong impressions of a salutary nature on the foreign courts. He received a complimentary letter from Katharine, Empress of Russia; to which he returned a dignified and



impressive answer, strongly urging upon her the line of conduct right to be adopted in the existing condition of danger to which the civilized world was exposed.

He was about the same period solicited to take upon him the support of the claims brought forward by the members of the church of Rome, in Ireland; to which he freely assented; and his son Richard Burke was appointed their agent. This amiable and promising young man came over to Ireland, with the view to impart, if possible, a tone of moderation and prudence to the somewhat misdirected proceedings of that body. It was by no means a favourable opening for a political career. The spirit and temper of this most unfortunate class of the Irish people was just, at that period sustaining a change productive of many dark and deep calamities, first to themselves, and through them to Ireland. The revolutionary temper of the time, which had quickly found a congenial element in Ireland, was communicated to them. Long suppressed by a penal system, highly oppressive in itself; but, perhaps, the necessary counterbalance to the profession of a foreign allegiance inconsistent with the constitution, they had sunk into a torpor, and showed little temper to take part in public affairs. But the times had changed: a kindly spirit had grown up towards them among the protestants, the most oppressive of the penal enactments had been repealed, and they began to breathe the air of freedom. It was perhaps at an unfortunate period. Always ready by temperament, to listen to the language of discontent, and to obey any summoner to strife, they were in their triumph taught to believe that the concessions they had obtained, had been the result of weakness and fear, and that they were but preliminary to the entire triumph of their church, in the struggle which was to free their country from the English yoke. This spirit did not indeed now, as in a former time, originate among the members of the Papal Church; they caught the revolutionary contagion from a wide-spreading conspiracy which had its seed from France, and its root among the volunteers, but which found its proper soil among these who had hopes and grievances both real and fanciful to feed excitement on. Old recollections were revived; present discontents inflamed; party animosities added to these. But the new enthusiasm—the spirit of the Jacobins, philosophers and constitution makers, governed the whole. Young and talented, but untaught and unregulated enthusiasts, fired with ambitious yearnings for change, and inspired by false speculations, had begun to rise to the surface. Old grievances were become but the vail under which the foul machinations of conspiracy, and the yeasty workings of the French Revolution, were secretly preparing. This, not then understood even in Ireland—and long after confirmed by subsequent disclosures,\* gave a tone to the leaders of the popular party, very much adapted to perplex young Burke. He did not perceive or enter into their views; much discontent was shown, and still more broadly vented among the leaders of the party. In a word, he was unconsciously placed in communication with the *United Irishmen*.

It will be enough to mention here, that Mr Burke's efforts were on

\* This will be satisfactorily explained in a brief sketch of Tone's life.



this occasion attended with considerable success, of which the particulars will hereafter come to be detailed.

In 1792, his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds died. Mr Burke was left his executor, with legacies amounting to £4000. After conducting the funeral, he made an effort to return thanks to the members of the Royal Academy, for the honour shown to the remains of their president: his feelings so overpowered him, that he was unable to proceed, and after some vain efforts was compelled to relinquish the task. He nevertheless drew up a character of his departed friend for the public journals; the author was immediately recognised by his style, and it was described even by an enemy as being "as fine a portrait as Reynolds ever painted."

Mr Burke, though far less alert on public questions, still came forward on such as appeared by their tendency to involve the principles of the constitution. We shall not stop to dwell on his able and elaborate "Sketch of a negro code," drawn up in 1780; but at this time when the slave trade was under discussion, sent by him to Mr Dundas. Nor can we afford to dwell with suitable fulness upon his opposition to Mr Grey's motion for parliamentary reform, a measure which the reader of these pages must at once perceive to have been unsuited to the state of the time, if referred to the principles and views of Mr Burke.

He at this period took a decided part against a motion introduced by Mr Fox, to repeal certain legal disabilities affecting the Unitarians. Whether or not a class of persons professing deism, under the form and name of christianity, were properly the subjects of legal restriction, is a question needless to discuss here; but as we have already suggested in this memoir, the same temper of mind which rejects the authority of the Scriptures, is the ready recipient for all other disorganizing tendencies and opinions. The Unitarians then actually composed the medium in England, for the reception and transfusion of revolutionary notions. As a sect, their main object was the overthrow of the church; as a party, they were no less animated with a strong and zealous animosity against the constitution and government. Such a combination of demerits, called decisively for the utmost opposition of every true christian or sane statesman. Mr Burke's speech is extant in a corrected form in his Works.

In the mean time, the progress of events was giving the strongest as well as the most public and authoritative of all possible confirmations to his political reasonings and statements. And the effect became every day more broadly visible among the party he had left; they were diminishing in numbers, and still more decidedly losing ground in public estimation. The respect of the better classes of thinkers, for his person and character, increased, and while he was intent on the tranquil cultivation of retirement, his opinion was earnestly sought by the wisest statesmen of the age.

Mr Pitt naturally desired to gain an accession so important, as that division of the whigs whom the extreme opinions adopted by their leader had impelled to separate with Mr Burke. A negotiation for this purpose was set on foot, and Mr Burke, who took a considerable part to effect so desirable an end, took the occasion to urge the advantages to be derived from the accession of Mr Fox. On Mr

Fox he also pressed the expediency of such an alliance, through the medium of common friends. We here only notice this, because it ascertains the fallacy of the slanderous imputation of secret enmity. Dissevered from Mr Fox by wounded feelings and a sense (somewhat extreme,) of duty, he yet retained a tender affection for him, and a strong desire to induce him to quit the extravagant course into which he had been diverted by the worship of popularity. The hope was vain—Mr Fox demanded as a primary condition, the resignation of Mr Pitt, that they might take office on terms of equality.

The emergencies of the period continued still thickening, and Mr Burke drew up a paper containing "Hheads for consideration on the present state of affairs," of which he sent copies to the king, the members of government, and to the leading members of the whig seceding party, known as the "Portland party." In this sagacious state paper, he exhibits just anticipations of political results yet in the womb of futurity, and far from their development. Yet wonderful as must appear the anticipation of so much that time has since realized, the manner is still more remarkable; free from the ambiguity, the vague amplitude or the mystic obscurity of those who aim to be, or who have been considered oracular, Mr Burke's predictions are deduced from his facts and his principles, with the clearness of science. He reasons largely from the experience of the past, collects all the precedents of European history, examines the state of France, its moral elements, with the temper, liabilities and resources of Europe. Among other memorable conclusions of this pamphlet, he states his persuasion that no effective opposition was likely ever to be made, of which England should not be the head and arm. He also contended that war was inevitable, and left no important portion of the subsequent events in the history of Europe, unmarked, in this remarkable paper.

Separated in a measure from the movements of party, Mr Burke entered on a strenuous course of independent action to promote a sound and uniform action of the powers, resources, and talents of the kingdom; and this with a degree of effect unparalleled in the history of modern British statesmen. Respected by all but that extreme party which was daily sinking into a faction and becoming more rebuked by events; his counsel was sought, and his advice either wholly or partially adopted on every question of moment. Among these marks of standard character may be also enumerated the distinction of being the mark of abuse in the National Convention. "The moment," said a principal orator of that notorious assembly, "is not yet arrived in which may be seen at the bar of the revolutionary tribunal that Orestes of the British parliament, the madman Burke, the insolent lord Grenville, or the plotter Pitt."

In the summer of 1793, Mr Burke with his son accompanied the Duke of Portland, who went to Oxford to be installed as chancellor of the university. While there Mr Burke chiefly remained with Mr Winstanly principal of Alban Hall. The following extract of a letter written on this occasion by the principal, is given by Mr Prior:—"It would indeed be as useless as it would be presumptuous in me to attempt to add to the reputation of Mr Burke. Among the studies to which I have immediately applied, there is one which, from his atten-



tion to the more important concerns of active life, it might be supposed that he had overlooked; I mean that of ancient and modern languages. Those, however, who were acquainted with the universality of his information, will not be surprised to hear, that it would have been exceedingly difficult to have met with a person who knew more of the philosophy, the history, and filiation of languages, or of the principles of etymological deduction than Mr Burke." Numerous stories are extant, many of which have been collected by Mr Prior, which both confirm and amplify the impression which this is calculated to convey, of the universality and the precision of Mr Burke's range of information. But it may be here observed, that such is the impression made by the perusal of his speeches; partaking of all the varied merits of the best speakers of his day, falling short in none, excelling in the principal, he stands apart in this high praise. With the rich wardrobe of phrase and figure—the rapid perception—the wide comprehension—the soundness of reason based on the profound acquaintance with principle, with a vigour and luxuriance of the loftiest poetical imagination sobered by the purest taste, he commanded all the various elements of a far grasping acquaintance with all the history, the nature and the concerns of mankind. Such is the joint impression made by his speeches and writings; and there is a uniform testimony that it was confirmed by the whole intercourse of his life. Living at the same period with many great men, there was not one of them, to whom the application of Johnson's sayings of him, would not have sounded absurdly. But such men are certain to be underrated, even by their admirers; they cannot be grasped by the intellectual glance, and must be looked on in detail.

In 1794, Mr Burke had the misfortune to lose his attached and loving brother Richard. Their affectionate intercourse had been unbroken through life, and for many years Richard had been borne forward in life, by the influence, while he shared the home and purse of his eldest brother; services amply repaid in devoted love. Of Richard's talents, the recollections are favourable, and he was considered as a rising lawyer at the bar. He wrote well, and was much esteemed for the goodness of his heart, as well as for his spirit and facetious humour, which enlivened the intellectual circle in which he lived. For the rest we may quote Goldsmith.

"Here lies honest Richard, whose fate I must sigh at,  
 Alas, that such frolic should now be so quiet!  
 What spirits were his, what wit and what whim!  
 Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb!  
 Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball;  
 Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!  
 In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,  
 That we wished him full ten times a day at old Nick;  
 But missing his mirth and agreeable vein,  
 As often we wished to have Dick back again."

The last appearance of Mr Burke in the house of commons, was on the 20th of June, 1794. On that day the thanks of the house was moved by Mr Pitt, to the managers of Mr Hastings' trial, which was carried. Mr Burke had a little before published a digested report of the proceedings—a work which by the best authorities has been ad-



mitted to stand at the head of that highest class of state papers to which it belongs. Mr Charles Butler, and Mr Mills, have done it justice; but as we are compelled to be very brief, we shall here prefer to extract the few compendious observations of Mr Prior; simply premising that they are no more than rigidly just. Speaking of this report, Mr Prior says it "is reputed by those who are presumed to be competent judges of the subject, which embraces very important questions of law, one of the ablest and most elaborate papers that have come from the pen of Mr Burke. It observes in detail, under the various heads of jurisdiction of the lords—law of parliament—rule of pleading—publicity of judges' opinions—debates on evidence—circumstantial evidence—practice of the courts below—and others, as well as upon all minor circumstances connected with the impeachment; and the greatest source of surprise to the reader will be, the recondite and various knowledge of legal forms, principles and history which it exhibits, and which must hereafter make it a source of interest to the legal profession, upon which it comments with so much force and freedom, but without the least hostility." One sentence from Mr C. Butler, we must add,—“The question occurs on a nice point in the doctrine of testimony; but it embraces the whole subject, and abounds in learning and profound observations; unfortunately its title is far from alluring, and it therefore has been little read.”

Soon after Mr Burke vacated his seat by the acceptance of the Chiltern Hundreds.

Though thus ostensibly retiring from public life, even still he was not less active in his efforts for the cause, which he had of late years so ably, and so successfully maintained. Nor can it be reckoned by right-minded observers of that period as the least useful of his services, to have brought about the union of his own party; that is to say, of the Portland party, with government. The flippancy of assertion usual on such occasions, attacked this junction with the common reproach of secession, desertion, &c. We have anticipated all that need be said in reply; but reply is needless. There was no secession and no desertion, unless such may be charged on Mr Fox, and those who with him had separated themselves from all that was sober, reasonable, and sound in their party, by the adoption of the philosophers, infidels and antisocialists of the French revolution. Attempts were made by their mutual friends to effect a personal reconciliation between Mr Burke and Mr Fox. Mr Burke's own observation was this, “My separation from Mr Fox is a principle and not a passion; I hold it a sacred duty, while the present disorganizing system continues in operation in Europe, to confirm what I have said and written against it by this sacrifice, and it is no trifling test of my sincerity. To me the loss is great; but to what purpose would be our meeting, when our views and conduct continue so essentially at variance? I could take no delight with him, nor he probably with me.”

But at this time a trial was preparing for Mr Burke, which was to consign the remainder of his laborious and honourable life to a condition of utter desolation and sorrow, such as death alone could relieve. Richard Burke, his only son—whose worth, amiability, and promising talents, are variously attested, both by the evidence of many persons of

well-known authority, by the remains of his epistolary correspondence, and by some able papers, the work of his hand—had for some time shown indications of a delicate constitution. He was the favourite object of his father's hopes, earnest wishes, and affections: in him all the domestic cares, occupations, and every object not involving the welfare of England and the good of mankind was centred. Mr Burke viewed his character and promising abilities with all the fond exaggeration of deep parental love, and laboured to convince the world that his son was to be a greater man than himself. He had been for several years the sharer of all his father's thoughts, and consulted by him in every concern of interest. From this, the reader may in some degree estimate the extent of such an affliction, to a mind like that of Mr Burke.

On vacating his seat, Mr Burke immediately took steps to secure the return of his son, with whom he proceeded to Malton, where they obtained the desired success. He also obtained for him the appointment of secretary to earl Fitzwilliam, on this nobleman being sent to the government of Ireland. But while he was thus securing, as he fondly thought, the starting-point of a brilliant career, the sad reality was mournfully anticipated by his friends. The medical friends who had been consulted on the delicacy of Richard were fearful of alarming Mr Burke by any painful disclosure; and his old friend, Dr Brocklesby, pronounced it as his opinion, that such a disclosure would prove fatal even more rapidly than his son's disease. Such an opinion may now serve to illustrate the sense entertained by Mr Burke's discerning friends, of the depth and force of his affections.

The physicians advised a removal to country air; and Cromwell house, near Brompton, was taken. There the progress of consumption became more marked and rapid, and it became necessary to apprize Mr Burke of the truth. From this moment, until the last, he took no rest, and little food, but resigned himself to a grief beyond the powers of nature to endure for many days.

Death to the christian is surely no calamity; but the bereavement of human affection is so dreadful and shattering in its effects, and may be aggravated so much by circumstances, as to offer a contemplation solemn and awful beyond all powers of language to convey. Nor can the success of such an effort of description be attended with any better effect than to shock, and pain the best sympathies of the human breast. The incidents of the last scenes of Richard Burke's life are minutely detailed, and may be read in Mr Prior's Work. They present a narration of real woe, such as is not easily paralleled among the pages of fiction, either for the minute and touching incidents, the living truth with which they convey the scene, or the dignity and interest of the sufferers.

From the moment of the fatal event, Mr Burke was, as he called himself, "a desolate old man." A few short extracts from his correspondence, forcibly denote the change. "I am alone—I have none to meet my enemies in the gate"—"desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counsellor, and my pride."

Mr Burke was to have been promoted to the peerage. This event rendered such a step undesirable. Such honours had lost their charm,



or if anything, it would have been a cruel aggravation to wear the empty trappings of this world in the utter desolation of the heart; nor will good taste regret that the noble name of Edmund Burke has come down to us unclouded by an empty title.

A few words must be said as to the intrinsic value of one, made memorable by the love of such a father. It is thought by some that his merits have been exaggerated by paternal fondness. It cannot be denied that some reasonable deduction must be made on such natural grounds; but Mr Burke's opinion cannot be so wholly set aside as to avoid the admission, that it must have required no slight attainments, no ordinary or doubtful gifts, to elicit his admiration. If love is partial, it is also exacting and fastidious; it awakens a jealous anxiety for the fame of its object, which is quick to anticipate disappointment, and vigilant in detecting and repairing the causes of failure. Such refinements, too, are congenial to the refining spirit and nice discrimination of Mr Burke. His judgment cannot go for nothing. Some of young Burke's papers which have been published in various memoirs and histories are admitted to be very ably written, even by those who depreciate the writer. Mr Prior gives at length a character of him, from the pen of Dr Walter King, bishop of Rochester, who had been from an early age his friend. It is written with taste, talent, and the tone of nice and critical discernment, and cannot be set down for a mere eulogistic effusion, which would much disgrace the sincerity of the writer. We shall extract a few short paragraphs. "His talents, whether for business or for speculation, were not exceeded by any which the present, or perhaps any former age could boast, &c. \* \* \* \* The beauty and extent of his erudition was great; but what distinguished him in literature was, the justness, refinement, and accuracy of his taste.

"In society, his manners were elegant; and the best judges both at home and abroad thought him one of the best bred men of the age. He was at the same time rigidly and severely sincere. He was of moderate stature, but of a beautiful countenance, and an elegant and graceful figure. He wanted no accomplishment of body or mind."

The writer who has been emphatic in his praise of sincerity was probably sincere. And several of the foregoing remarks are not merely opinion, but observation and the allegation of fact. Dr King has one record here which should not be omitted. "To his father and mother his affection and assiduity were such as passed all description, and all examples that the writer of this has ever seen,—here everything of self was annihilated; here he was as perfect as human nature can admit. At home and in his family he was indeed all in all. He lived in and for his parents, and he expired in their arms."

From the moment of this sad event, the colour of life was wholly changed to his father. It was to him a truly immedicable and rooted sorrow,

"To which life nothing brighter or darker can bring,  
For which joy has no balm, and affliction no sting."

From this time, his intercourse with the ministers became rare—and although he still took an active interest in public affairs, his exertions



were mainly confined to the press. He was frequently consulted personally and by letter, and on such occasions he readily and fully communicated his advice. Such was the natural activity of his disposition, that it would indeed have been impossible for him to recover that degree of equanimity which every mind, not radically unsound, must regain by the healing influences of time, without so far at least falling back into the habit of his whole life: and the incessant industry which had been the pleasure and inclination of better times, was now the resource of a mind occupied by painful recollections and shrinking from the afflicting loneliness of old age.

At this period, the question of Roman Catholic Emancipation occupied a principal share of the public attention, and was much and anxiously discussed in both countries. Mr Burke took an active part in endeavouring to bring the English cabinet to a decision favourable to the views of Mr Grattan; and had even, through the duke of Portland, seemingly effected this purpose. Mr Pitt was himself brought over, and there can be no fair doubt that, for a short interval, the measure was fairly contemplated, and means adopted for the purpose of carrying it into effect. But a sudden change took place in the councils of government, too violent to admit of doubt as to the fact, though liable to some differences of construction as to its causes and motives. For some detail of these particulars, we shall find a more suitable space. The question is so involved with party passions, that it cannot be justly introduced in a work not written for any party, without some important distinctions. It is still more involved in his representations. But the Irish history of that interval more appropriately belongs to the lives of those who were more directly concerned in the politics of Ireland at this period.

A pamphlet at this time written by lord Auckland, and sent by him to Mr Burke, drew forth a spirited reply, which was drawn up within two days after receiving the pamphlet. This is his "Fourth Letter on a Regicide Peace." In the private letter to lord Auckland, acknowledging the compliment, there are some passages which may serve as illustrating the state of the writer's temper and spirits, at this period of his life. Lord Auckland had observed, that he and Mr Burke had long sailed on "different tacks." Mr Burke takes up the metaphor, "It is true, my lord, what you say, that through our public life, we have generally sailed on somewhat different tacks. We have so undoubtedly, and we should so still, if I had continued to keep the sea. In that difference you rightly observe, that I have always done justice to your skill and ability as a navigator, and to your good intentions towards the cargo and the ship's company. I cannot say now that we are on different tacks. There would be no propriety in the metaphor. I can sail no longer; my vessel cannot be said to be even in port; she is wholly condemned and broken up. To have an idea of that vessel, you must call to mind what you have often seen on the Kentish road. Those planks of tough and hardy oak that used for years to brave the buffets of the Bay of Biscay, are now turned with their waspish grain and empty trunnion holes, into very wretched pales for the enclosure of a wretched farmyard." Further on he writes: "I find, my dear lord, that you think some persons who are not satisfied with the secu-

rities of a Jacobin peace, to be persons of intemperate minds. I may be, and I fear I am, with you, in that description; but pray, my lord, recollect that very few of the causes that make men intemperate can operate upon me. Sanguine hopes, vehement desires, inordinate ambition, implacable animosity, party attachments, or party interests; all these with me have no existence. For myself, or a family, (alas! I have none,) I have nothing to hope or fear in this world. I am attached by principle, inclination, and gratitude, to the king, and to the present ministry."

"Perhaps you may think that my animosity to opposition is the cause of my dissent on seeing the politics of Mr Fox, (which while I was in the world, I combatted by every instrument which God had put into my hands, and in every situation in which I had taken part,) so completely adopted in your lordship's book; but it was with pain I broke with that great man for ever in that cause—and I assure you, it is not without pain that I differ with your lordship in the same principles. But it is of no concern. I am far below the region of those great and tempestuous passions. I feel nothing of the intemperance of mind. It is rather sorrow and dejection than anger." The whole letter may be found in Mr Prior's volume.

The anecdotes which remain of this period of Mr Burke's life are too numerous for a memoir, prolonged far beyond our due bounds. Most of the illustrious men of the following generation have retained and left valuable and impressive recollections. The most brief and casual intercourse with Mr Burke left some striking memento of goodness and wisdom, and a volume of such could easily be compiled.

In 1795, and 1796, there was a severe pressure of distress, owing to a scarcity of corn. Mr Burke erected a mill, and retailed corn at a reduced rate, and of course at no slight sacrifice of means, and thus diffused relief among the surrounding poor.

In the same year, pensions to the amount of £3,700 a-year were granted by the government to Mr Burke. This grant was creditable in the highest degree to the king and his ministers; it was entirely unsought and unexpected, and plainly uninfluenced by any expectation of future services. Mr Burke was now retired from public life, and seemingly from all further exertion. His broken frame, disordered nervous system, and spirits at the same time restless and dejected, appeared to forebode the near approach of death; or if not, of intellectual decay. Already his friends had become alarmed by rumours of insane symptoms; and his enemies, through whom these rumours received their currency and shape, were preparing to trample in cowardly security on the remains of the dead lion, the scourge of charlatanism, and the defender of the state. Never had the reward of public service been more honourably deserved or bestowed: the triumphs of Trafalgar, or the crowning glories of Waterloo, were not intrinsically more decisive or beneficial in result, than those able, laborious, and persevering exertions of pen and tongue, which, under the mercy of Providence, arrested and repelled from the shores of Britain, the furious waves of infidelity, anarchy, and civil ruin.

But there was a faction which had concentrated its entire energies in the cause of democracy, and of which the whole ambition and all the



criminal passions, (deepening and blackening downward from the leader, who looked for power, to the lowest follower, who looked for plunder and revenge,) all its ends were connected with, or tended to a treasonable union together with the hellhounds of Parisian revolt—rebels against God and man. By these Mr Burke's departure from the party which they had degraded, was deeply resented—the writing which had exposed them to England, and frustrated their designs still more. They had triumphed in his afflictions, and looked with the malice of fiends on the supposed prostration of his noble powers. The well-earned reward of these services roused them to fury. Immediately, a storm of the missiles of an abandoned faction, of which the perusal disgusts and lacerates the moral sense and taste—was converged from all the low and base dens and lurking-holes of party malice on his devoted head. The duke of Bedford, and lord Lauderdale, attacked him in parliament: they had no cause to pride themselves on the result. The attack drew forth an able, manly, and crushing reply from lord Grenville. Nor was the usual promptitude of Mr Burke's pen wanting. It was evidently fit that he should justify the government, and thus it became in a measure necessary, that he should vindicate his own claims upon the gratitude of his country—in the execution of this duty, the exposure of his discomfited assailants was no less essentially involved. His own defence, was thus another fatal shaft aimed by the same strong hand, for the dispersion and dismay of his opponents—while it remains a historical record and monument of the great struggle of that day between anarchy and order. In either respect, as well as for the remarkable proof it offers of unabated power of reasoning, of statement, of masterly defence, and of paralyzing and withering irony; we can recommend it to our readers as the best justification and corroboration of the views strongly asserted in our memoir. We cannot even abstract it here; but a few extracts may be acceptable:—"To be ill spoken of, in whatever language they speak, by the zealots of the new sect in philosophy and politics, of which these noble persons think so charitably, and of which others think so justly, to me is no matter of uneasiness or surprise. To have incurred the displeasure of the duke of Orleans, or the duke of Bedford; to fall under the censure of citizen Brissot, or of his friend, the earl of Lauderdale; I ought to consider as proofs, not the least satisfactory, that I have produced some of the effect I proposed by my endeavours. I have laboured hard to earn, what the noble lords are generous enough to pay. Personal offence I have given them none. The part they take against me is from zeal to the cause. It is well! it is perfectly well! I have to do homage to their justice. I have to thank the Bedfords and the Lauderales, for having so fully acquitted towards me whatever arrear of debt was left undischarged by the Priestleys and the Paines." In this easy and flowing commencement, there is much art, as well as elegance; nothing could more strikingly at that time illustrate the real merits of Mr Burke, than the simple fact, that both in Paris and in England, he was then, and had for some time been, the general object of a degree of vituperation, that evidenced the effects he had produced. Nor is it less to be remarked, that in thus putting



forward this unanswerable point, he contrives to hitch his immediate antagonist into a most disgraceful and disparaging position.—Having suitably noticed lord Grenville's noble stand in his behalf: "Retired as I am from the world, and from all its affairs and all its pleasures, I confess it does kindle, in my nearly extinguished feelings, a very vivid satisfaction to be so attached and so commended." Alluding directly to his pension, he says, "In one thing I can excuse the duke of Bedford for his attack upon me, and my mortuary pension. He cannot readily comprehend the transaction he condemns. What I have obtained was the fruit of no bargain; the production of no intrigue; the result of no compromise; the effect of no solicitation. The first suggestion of it never came from me, mediately or immediately, to his majesty, or any of his ministers. It was long known that the instant my engagements would permit it, and before the heaviest of all calamities had for ever condemned me to obscurity and sorrow, I had resolved on a total retreat. I had executed that design. I was entirely out of the way of serving or of hurting any statesman, or any party, when the ministers so generously and so nobly carried into effect the spontaneous bounty of the crown. Both descriptions have acted as became them. When I could no longer serve them, the ministers have considered my situation. When I could no longer hurt them, the revolutionists have trampled on my infirmity. My gratitude, I trust, is equal to the benefit conferred. It came to me indeed at a time of life, and in a state of mind and body, in which no circumstance of fortune could afford me any pleasure. But this was no fault in the royal donor, or in his ministers, who were pleased, in acknowledging the merits of an invalid servant of the public, to assuage the sorrows of a desolate old man."

Mr Burke enters into a brief and forcible statement of his principal services, in which he proves the great labour they cost. Talking of the pay-office act, he says, "the first of these systems cost me, with every assistance which my then situation gave me, pains incredible. I found an opinion common through all the offices, and general in the public at large, that it would prove impossible to reform and methodize the office of paymaster-general. I undertook it, however, and I succeeded in my undertaking. Whether the military service, or whether the general economy of the finances have profited by that act, I leave to those who are acquainted with the army, and with the treasury, to judge." He then similarly vindicates the establishment bill; and proceeds with great felicity of illustration, to show the importance of these changes, and the critical character of the time when they were introduced. "Astronomers," he says, "have supposed that if a certain comet whose path intersected the ecliptic, had met the earth in some (I forget what,) sign,\* it would have whirled us along

\* This is the incident by which Whiston attempted to explain the deluge. But from the smallness of that particular comet, its entire want of solidity, and also from the actual nature of the luminous vapour of which it is now thought to be mainly composed, there is no great likelihood in either notion. Had the earth been but one month in advance of its actual place in 1832, the consequence would have been experimentally ascertained; as Biela's comet at that period actually passed across its orbit.

with it, in its eccentric course into God knows what regions of heat and cold. Had the portentous comet of the 'rights of man' which

'From its horrid hair shakes pestilence of war ;'

and,\*

'with fear of change

Perplexes monarchs.'

Had that comet crossed upon us in that internal state of England, nothing human could have prevented our being irresistibly hurried out of the highway of heaven, into all the vices, crimes, horrors, and miseries, of the French Revolution."

His observations on the question of parliamentary reform have an historical value, and are otherwise remarkable as they exemplify the force of thought and language, which he still retained when the world thought him broken in mind and frame. Speaking of the projects of the reformers of that premature time, he says, "had they taken place, not France, but England would have had the honour of leading up the death-dance of democratic revolution,"—a fact of which the truth is nearly demonstrable. His sketch of lord North is one of those unequalled portraitures which he alone could draw. It has a special value; for it is from the hand of an adversary. "I do not mean to speak disrespectfully of lord North. He was a man of admirable parts; of general knowledge; of a versatile understanding, fitted for every sort of business; of infinite wit and pleasantry; of a delightful temper; and with a mind most perfectly disinterested. But it would be only to degrade myself by a weak adulation, and not to honour the memory of a great man, to deny that he wanted something of the vigilance, and a spirit of command, that the time required. Indeed, a darkness next to the fog of this awful day lowered over the whole region. For a little time the helm appeared abandoned—

"Ipse diem noctemque negat discernere cœlo,  
Nec meminisse viæ mediâ Palinurus in undâ."

Having fully described the emergencies of that time, Mr Burke next proceeded to state, what was then well known, that he had himself been possessed of great public weight; in fact he was at that time all that is now understood as leader of the opposition, with advantages in himself and in his party rarely belonging to this character. He then directly adverts to his conduct, "at the time I speak of and having a momentary lead, so aided and so encouraged, as a feeble instrument in a mighty hand—I do not say I saved my country; I am sure I did my country important service. There were few indeed who did not at that time acknowledge it, and that time was thirteen years ago. It was but one voice, that no man in the kingdom better deserved an honourable provision should be made for him."

\* The above quotation curiously indicates the elective range of Mr Burke's fancy, as well as his masterly command of Milton's great epic. He has brought together the appropriate passages from two similitudes in two different books of the *Paradise Lost*,—the comet in the first, and the eclipse in the second; both, how strikingly to the purpose!

But we had not intended to proceed so far into the contents of one of the most conclusive, eloquent, and instructive papers we can recollect to have read; and of which there is no paragraph, and not many sentences which do not offer something which one is reluctant to omit. Having fully and at some length explained his views of reform and vindicated his own measures—he turns on his antagonist, and in the language of courtesy he treats him to a most blighting exposure of his own comparative intrinsic insignificance in a brief historic sketch, which there would now be no propriety in recalling. The other antagonist of Mr Burke, lord Lauderdale, a statesman of larger calibre than the Duke, lived to do justice to the foresight and wisdom of Mr Burke; the following extract from one of his speeches, is one of our numerous obligations to Mr Prior. “He (Mr Burke) was the only man in the country whose powers were equal to the forming and accomplishing so systematic and able a plan of reform; not a mean, narrow, wretched system of retrenchment, breaking in upon the dignity of the crown and the honour of the nation; but a great and beautiful arrangement of office, calculated not to degrade a government, but to exalt and adorn it.”

There were indeed about the period to which we are now arrived, and during the remainder of the same generation, many equal or still more remarkable concessions of the same character, to the superior insight of Mr Burke. As time slowly withdrew the obscurity of the future, which baffled the penetration of other men, the close successive fulfilments of his forewarnings too distinct and uniform to be casual, could not fail to excite attention and elicit a tardy justice from the most reluctant and obstinate of his adversaries. Mr Fox repeatedly expressed his wonder, and when some servile follower of his party said that Mr Burke’s opinions would be looked on by posterity as the ravings of a brilliant lunatic, Mr Fox answered that “whether insane or inspired, fate seemed determined to make him an uncommon political prophet.” Assuredly volumes could not go much further to establish Mr Burke’s wisdom; or the true contrast between him and his popular rival.

Mr Burke was in fact, one of the immortal few in whom the character of the true philosopher was realized; not a projector of speculative notions resting on gratuitous assumptions, and despising the realities of actual existence; quick and large observations were in him the support of just, clear, and cautious reason. He was perhaps the first and last great master of a true political science, and was thus enabled to perceive as sure consequences, what others, blind to the casual chain, could only look on as chance.\* But now that the long

\* While this page was going through the press, we have happened to light upon the following valuable testimony from Mr Hallam. In his estimate of the mind of lord Bacon, having enumerated all the most distinguished historians, philosophers and statesmen, who preceded Bacon, he observes of him, “we shall I think find that one man may almost be compared with all of these together. When Galileo is named as equal to Bacon, it is to be remembered that Galileo was no moral or political philosopher, and, in this department, Leibnitz certainly falls very short of Bacon. Burke, perhaps, comes, of all modern writers, the nearest to him; but though Bacon may not be more profound than Burke, he is more copious and comprehensive.”



succession of events, thus so clearly stamped as genuine materials for a more rational science than seems to be generally cultivated by public men, is thus nearly run to its end; we cannot help earnestly desiring that some statesman-like understanding were employed in the analysis of such materials, and in the systematic structure of real science which would arise to put some end to the shallow and unprincipled views of an age that is not grown wise by much and sore experience. The causes now in operation are too pervading and energetic for the hand of human power to stay; the working of the social system is hourly more and more assuming the uncontrollable force of a great operation of human nature; the completion, probably, of the design of that supreme will from which its energies are derived, and its moral forces directed to a determinate end. But it would be consoling both in many trials and many dangers, to see our rulers percipient of their course and destination, and of the true extent, limits, and agencies according to which their duties ought to be governed. Whatever may be the event of human progress, there is always a mighty sum of casualties of good and evil, which have been placed under the control of human virtue and wisdom, by Him who has made man a responsible being, and by whose law duties are prescribed; and though the future may be quite unaffected by human conduct, the present is thus within the range of its influences. But the scheme of instrumentality which connects the present with the future, is precisely the object of that science, from which alone the shoals, currents, and concealed reefs of the course can be with any precision foreseen and guarded. Nor is it to our rulers only that this knowledge is desirable; it would infuse a spirit of prudence and moderation where it is most of all wanted—in the aimless and disorderly sea of public passion—a mighty force, like the blind forces of physical nature, working to certain ends, unconsciously; but unlike them subject to the moral disorders which make their progress wild, irregular, and tempestuous. But we are rocking on a wide sea, full of untried courses, and not to be entered upon without many and far excursions, for most of which the life of Mr Burke offers the true point of departure.

Mr Burke's retirement, to the latest day of his life, was devoted still with the same unremitting devotion to the public good, to the study of agriculture, and a sound and practical political economy, as applicable to its only true objects, the distribution of the greatest share of good to the entire community. Much of his time was occupied in the superintendence of the emigrant school in his neighbourhood, which the government had instituted on his solicitation. He had entirely ceased to leave home, or willingly to receive any new acquaintance; his domestic circle consisted of his wife and cousin William Burke, all in a measure invalids. His frequent visitor was Mr Windham, through whom it is probable he was consulted by the ministers. His own account of his condition at the time is contained in a letter to Mr Gahagan. "Alas! my dear friend, I am not what I was two years ago; society is too much for my nerves. I sleep ill at night; and am drowsy and sleep much in the day. Every exertion of spirits which I make for the society I cannot refuse costs me much, and leaves me doubly heavy and dejected after it."

And yet it was in this state of seemingly utter exhaustion of mind and body, that he wrote one of the most powerful and masterly productions of his pen; the "Thoughts on a Regicide Peace,"—a work which produced an immediate and decisive effect upon the public mind, and astonished both friends and opponents. Among the numerous replies which it drew forth, one published in the *Monthly Review* by Sir James Mackintosh, affords a most eloquent and worthy tribute of praise, which cannot with propriety be omitted. "Such is an outline of this publication, of which if it be considered merely as a work of literature, it might be sufficient to say, that it is scarcely surpassed in excellence by any of the happiest productions of the best days of its author. The same vast reach and comprehension of view—the same unbounded variety of allusion, illustration and ornament, drawn from every province of nature and of science—the same unrivalled mastery over language—the same versatility of imagination, which at will transforms itself from sublime and terrific genius into gay and playful fancy—the same happy power of relieving the harshness of political dispute by beautiful effusions of sentiment, and of dignifying composition by grave and lofty maxims of moral and civil wisdom—the same inexhaustible ingenuity of presenting even common ideas under new and fascinating shapes—the same unlimited sway over the human passions, which fills us at his pleasure with indignation, with horror or with pity; and which equally commands our laughter or our tears; in a word, the same wit, humour, pathos, invention, force, dignity, copiousness and magnificence, are conspicuous in this production which will immortalize the other writings of Mr Burke. There is nothing ordinary in his view of a subject. He is, perhaps, of all writers the one of whom it may be said with the most strict truth, that no idea appears hackneyed in his hands; no topic seems commonplace when he treats it. When the subject must (from the very narrowness of human conception which bounds even the very genius of Mr Burke,) be borrowed, the turn of thought, and the manner of presenting it, are his own. The attitude and drapery are peculiar to the master."

This work has attached to it the melancholy interest of having been his last; interrupted by the hand of death. It is a sufficient indication of a fact, which is confirmed by numerous interesting anecdotes, that his intellect burnt bright and clear to the last. To the very latest moment his breast was glowing with the noblest, as well as the most endearing sentiments of humanity; communicating a delight, sadly tempered with sorrow, to all who approached him. And none approached without being instructed, softened, and impressed. He was engaged in the printing of his third letter, when he was interrupted by the summons from a life of labour; realizing the presentiment under which he seems to have begun; "What I say I *must* say at once. Whatever I write is in its nature testamentary; it may have the weakness, but it has the sincerity of a dying declaration." Such it turned out to be. In this last bequest of wisdom, he emphatically pronounced an opinion yet at the time unanticipated, that the war would be of long duration. "I speak emphatically, and I desire that it should be marked, *in a long war.*" Of this he indeed offers no vague proofs drawn from political theory, but at some length states



the grounds of his opinion, derived from a careful and comprehensive study of the history of Europe; from the precedent of former wars with a sagacious analysis and comparison of their causes. Such was the real source of that wonderful forecast, which seemed to hold up the remote succession of the future to his glance.

During the interval in which these letters were composed, Mr Burke's health was rapidly sinking. But though it is from many incidental circumstances rendered apparent that he was aware of the probable result, he manifested no weak attachment to life and no unmanly fear. Resting with the fullest confidence in the hopes of the gospel—which was his daily study and consolation—he dismissed all unworthy apprehensions of the approaching change, and stood firm and unflinching to the last day of his life, in the strenuous discharge of the great duty for which Providence had endowed him with its abundant and overflowing gifts. Among his domestic circle he was the same kind, indulgent, and affectionate friend as ever; forgetful of himself and his infirmities, when he could administer to the wants, or contribute to the happiness of others. Happily for himself and the affectionate friends who attended his last illness, these bright and beautiful indications of the christian spirit in a mind of the highest order, were unimpaired by bodily pain; his chief uneasiness arose from his reluctance to give trouble even to his servants, so thoroughly was he free from selfishness, and consistent in benevolence to the last. His servants who were devotedly attached to their master—friends, by whom deathbed scenes are not often sought—vied with each other for the post of trouble and anxiety, and pressed their service as his nightly attendants.

On Friday, July 7th, being conscious of his approaching end, he set himself to review the conduct of his past life, of which during the early part of the day, he entered upon an outline stating his principal public acts, with their motives and attendant circumstances; vindicated his intentions, and regretted the pain he might have on some occasions given by any unguarded petulance of manner or severity of rebuke—leaving it as an earnest assurance that he never designed to give offence. After this he gave his mind to the consolations of religion. He strongly and frequently repeated his full reliance on the sacrifice and advocacy of the Redeemer. Among other statements on the subject, he expressed his veneration for all sincere and zealous followers of Christ, to whatever church or sect they might belong, but that he himself considered the Articles of the Church of England to be the purest, and most in accordance with the standard of Scripture. The following morning was given to those devotional exercises suited to the awful and solemn change which was at hand; after which he conversed with composure and the most serene and unaffected cheerfulness with a young friend. Feeling weariness, he expressed a desire to be carried into another room. As Mr Nagle, with some of his servants, were bearing him in their arms, he faintly exclaimed “God bless you,” and his high and noble spirit was released from its worn-out frame, on Saturday, July 8th, 1797.

On the 15th, his remains were interred in Beaconsfield church, near those of his beloved son. Mr Fox had in the interval proposed



a public funeral in Westminster Abbey. The Abbey never indeed had been, or will be honoured with a nobler memory, or the records of England with a more venerable name, to the last syllable of recorded time.

But the deep affections of his life decided and consecrated the tomb of this truly illustrious man, of whom the following extract from his will is no unworthy memorial. "First, according to ancient, good, and laudable custom, of which my heart and understanding recognise the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for his mercy through the only merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire, if I should die in any place very convenient for its transport thither (but not otherwise,) to be buried in the church at Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother, and my dearest son, in all humility praying that, as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have a part in the resurrection of the just."

He further desired in the same solemn and affecting strain of language to have no needless expense or pomp.

His funeral was nevertheless attended by the great, the powerful, and the good. One so justly respected by all, and venerated by the best, could not be allowed to disappear like a passing cloud from the scene. The pall was borne by the lord chancellor; dukes of Devonshire and Portland; earl Fitzwilliam; the Speaker of the house of commons; earl of Inchiquin; right hon. Mr Windham, and Sir Gilbert Elliot; his remains were followed by a numerous train of the noblest of every party; and by the members of the several charitable institutions, which had been mainly upheld through his care and liberality. The principal of these was the emigrant school at Pen. Instituted by his desire, and mainly superintended by himself, he recommended it in his will to the protection of the government.

The anecdotes which remain of Mr Burke would of themselves fill an interesting volume; for no man of his day was so much the object of curious interest among persons of talent and learning. But this abundance has itself been the reason for their general omission in this memoir. Having been compelled, from a consideration of that main part of our duty which consists in justice to the fame of public men, to devote our care to a few main questions, on which the record of Edmund Burke must stand in history, we trust that no apology can be thought needful for omitting much that must have at least extended this memoir to double its present length. Should any reader judge that even so far we have too much exceeded bounds, we shall only say that it is the last trespass of the same kind we shall commit.

In person, Mr Burke was about five feet ten—his figure was athletic and symmetrical; he was in his younger days fond of exercise and expert at the sledge, stone, leaping, and other such trials of strength and agility. Many speak of his appearance as graceful and dignified; and some of his female describers, who must be allowed the best judges, describe his countenance as handsome, noble, and prepossessing.

## Henry Grattan.

BORN A.D. 1746—DIED A.D. 1820.

THE name of Grattan begins early to occur in the annals of Irish biography. It will be remembered by those who are familiar with the personal history of Swift. Patrick Grattan was a senior fellow in the Dublin University. He left several children; one of whom, Henry, the eldest, succeeded to the family property. He had a son, James, who married a Miss Marley, daughter to chief-justice Marley. This person was recorder of the city of Dublin for many years, and had the reputation of being a good lawyer and an honest man. From these parents was born Henry, the truly illustrious subject of the present memoir.

Henry Grattan was born on the 3d July, 1746. He was early sent to school at Mr Ball's in Great Ship street. At the same school was also educated Mr Fitzgibbon, afterwards lord chancellor of Ireland. How long he continued at this school we have no authority to say; but he was removed from it to a school in Abbey street in consequence of a most brutal and unwarrantable insult from the master. At this new school his conduct was such as to win the general respect of his schoolfellows.

In 1763, when he had attained his seventeenth year, he was attacked by a severe illness, which harassed him for a long time. In the same year he entered the university of Dublin. Here he obtained the highest honours of the collegiate course. He also, during the same interval, contracted intimacies with several eminent men, who were then his fellow-students. Among these were some with whom his subsequent intercourse was that of the most close and attached friendship—a sentiment deeply infused in his nature. The most agreeable and authentic materials for the description of his early life, and the formation of his character, are to be found in his epistolary correspondence with these friends. Much of this correspondence is happily extant, and will be found to occupy a considerable portion of the ample and detailed history of his life by his son, of which four volumes are in the hands of the public.

From these letters, we are enabled to trace with singular distinctness the primary constitution and the progress of Mr Grattan's character, both moral and intellectual. They indicate a mind, of which the earlier features seem rather to belong to literary retreat than to public life. Deep sensibility both to the ties of the heart and the attractions of external nature seems to govern his conduct; retiring, fastidious, refined, and imaginative, he offers all the moral traits from which a devoted worship of some favourite muse might have been anticipated. But the choice of a profession then eminently connected with public life, and an evidently eager taste for the discussion of public questions, his constant attendance upon, and sometimes admirable reports of, the debates of the English house of commons, marked more truly the direction of his future course.

A morbid tone had perhaps been imparted to his feelings by the circumstances in which it was his misfortune to be early placed.

Mr Grattan's life was early clouded by unhappiness arising from the unkindness of his father. This gentleman's discontent with his son seems attributable to a difference of political opinion. The tendencies of their politics were in fact diametrically opposite, and this at that period, and especially in Ireland, was a species of dissent hardly consistent with goodwill. To what extent the demonstrations of such a fatal interruption to the harmony which ought to subsist in so near a relation were carried, we have no means of judging. The father was a hard and austere man, and perhaps rendered habitually acrimonious by the long influence of place and political intercourse. By nature keenly alive to impressions of sentiment, and overflowing with those impassioned instincts, yearnings, and affections, which always belong to men of his highwrought mould of genius and enthusiasm, and to a temperament eminently poetic, the son felt deeply the alienation of his father's affections. He loved his father's person, and respected his talents, and had not yet learned the lesson of Irish party, to look at men through the sole medium of political opinion.

Having completed his academic terms, Mr Grattan next turned his mind to the choice of a profession. The consciousness of talent of a high order—the ambition of a young and ardent mind—the strong political aspirations already beginning to possess his faculties, and, perhaps, above all, the taste essentially rhetorical—all must have combined to point the way to the bar, then the high road to political and even social importance in Ireland. Accordingly, his letters indicate such a determination in 1767.

We ascertain, from his early letters to Mr Broome, that his father must have died in the summer of 1766, when Grattan was in his twentieth year. In a letter, dated June in this year, and written from Bellcamp, which we presume to be the paternal mansion, he writes as follows:—"The death of my father I suppose you have heard of. In the greatest agony of body, in the greatest distraction of mind, unexpectedly and impatiently, he expired. I am determined, on the first occasion, to retire with you to some country lodging," &c. Further on, he proceeds, "I write this letter from Bellcamp, where I have been these three days without any of the family, and where I intend to continue some days longer in the same solitude. I employ myself writing, reading, and courting the muse, and taking leave of that place where I am a guest, not an owner, and of which I shall now cease to be a spectator. I tell myself, by way of consolation, that happiness is not the gift of any one spot, however ancient and native—'*est ulubris, animus si te non deficit æquus*;' and that wherever I go the muse and your friendship shall accompany me. Perhaps the time may come when fortune '*patre valentior*,' may smile upon me, and shall enable my old age to resign my breath where first I received it. Farewell!—'tis too late to continue this epistle; I am invited to the wood by the wood-quest, the thrush, and every circumstance that attends the evening. I shall walk there for an hour, borrow aid from imagination, and return preferring the solitude of my situation to the sport, the bustle, or even the opulence of that of my acquaintance. Yours ever, H. GRATTAN."

It appears from one of his letters, dated 1767, that at this period



he was much in the habit of reading the writings of Bolingbroke, whom he admired as a reasoner and orator. The same letter affords a remarkable indication of that noble and disinterested tone of generous sentiment, which seems to have been the characteristic of his moral constitution, easily traced in all the acts of his life. It seems that his friend Broome, to whom the letter is addressed, was at the time looking for the means to obtain a commission in the army, and had expressed his anxiety on the subject to Mr Grattan. The following was the reply: "To lend the money is not the least inconvenient to me; on the contrary, your application to any one else for the sum I could supply, I should have esteemed an injury to me. You may depend on having it before the time you have limited."

Mr Grattan's time was earnestly devoted to the studies which were to fit him for the strenuous and splendid course he was destined to pursue. If in his correspondence great traces of languor, and the listless tone of idleness is often to be detected, it was but the effect of intense and ardent labour, displayed in the intervals of fatigue. His favourite amusements bespoke the mind strung to a high calling: the galleries of the house of commons, and the bar of the lords were his chosen haunts. He had the advantage of listening to the splendid orators of that day, when oratory had, in the persons of Chatham, Burke, and a few other eminent persons, reached the *maximum* of its power and splendour in modern times. As the reader may well conjecture, his favourite was Chatham, whose style is signalized by that specious power of representation and splendour of pointed phrase, which were afterwards the evident study and main weapons of Mr Grattan himself. From the same source he also drew ideas of the effect of manner and expressive delivery. The strong impression which he at this time received, is imbodied in the character which he afterwards drew of that great orator and statesman.

It was with regret that we have traced in some of his letters the evidences of the strong and fatal influence of that false philosophy which then was beginning to prevail, and which found no sufficient resistance in the relaxed state of religion. The powers of Mr Grattan's mind were those of strong sagacity, profound observation, a high moral sense, a brilliant fancy and its consequence, a ready and original taste for the combinations of language. But his mind was not endowed for philosophic investigation. There is not in his productions any indication either of the patient and self-directed scrutiny of contemplation, on which metaphysical research is grounded, or of the severe, scrupulous, and persevering logical deduction on which it must proceed. His powers, and the intellectual structure of his mind, were of an opposite and far more useful, as well as popular order. He was little likely to be imposed upon by the outward seemings of the world, or the professions of the men. But moral sophisms, and the plausibilities of the shallow but specious literature then called philosophy, maintained by popular names, by the manners of the age, and assimilated to a merely nominal condition of christianity, could hardly fail to warp the fancy of a youthful student of Bolingbroke. To these remarks it may be right to add, that in the brilliant circle of Irish society in which Mr Grattan's younger days were much spent, there prevailed the very

lowest tone of morals, and nearly a total absence of religion. In truth, the religion of the upper classes in that day of polished barbarism in Ireland was no other than the point of honour,—a rule which, while it nicely and strictly defines many of those moralities essential to private life, and for the maintenance of a low civilization, leaves untouched those vices to which it was addicted. Happily Mr Grattan was not one to be carried far by the cold frostwork fetters of the infidel philosophy; which is more shallow and flimsy than it is even specious, and must be quite incapable of casting a permanent hold over the clear vigorous faculties of such a mind.

His companion in the temple was Mr Day, who held rooms in partnership with him for three years. From a letter, long after addressed by this venerable person to Mr Grattan's son, some interesting details are to be obtained. "We lived," writes Mr Day, "in the same chambers in the middle temple, and took a house in Windsor forest, commanding a beautiful landscape; he delighted in romantic scenery. Between both, we lived together three or four years, the happiest period of my life." Another passage mentions, "When we resided in Windsor forest, he would spend whole moonlight nights rambling and losing himself in the thickest plantations; he would sometimes pause and address a tree in soliloquy, thus preparing himself early for that assembly which he was destined in latter life to adorn. One morning he amused us at breakfast, with an adventure of the night before, in the forest. In one of those midnight rambles, he stopped at a gibbet and commenced apostrophizing the chains in his usual animated strain, when he suddenly felt a tap on his shoulder, and on turning about was accosted by an unknown person—'how the devil did you get down?' To which the Rambler calmly replied—'Sir, I suppose you have an interest in that question!'" Such incidents often occur to the invention, and without any purpose of deception are told as pleasant stories; this we believe to be the common origin of nine-tenths of the adventures of the witty part of mankind. But in the present instance, the tale is highly characteristic of the teller. We are told that Mr Grattan's habits at this interval of his life were so eccentric, as to convey to his landlady some suspicions of his being deranged. "She complained to one of his friends, that the gentleman used to walk up and down in his garden most of the night, speaking to himself; and though alone, he was addressing some one on all occasions by the name of 'Mr Speaker, &c.'"

At the temple he first became acquainted with Dr Duigenan. And in the course of their conversation, they fell into a warm disputation, in which the politics and characters of either were strongly displayed. The incidents are mentioned by Judge Day who was present and tells the story; the end is curious enough. Having been violently excited, "they parted, and in the evening Grattan came to the Grecian, where we used to meet, with a long sword by his side. Duigenan did not make his appearance, but he wrote a poem criticising Grattan's figure with his long sword. It was comical; I showed it to your father, who was amused by the humorous turn, and so the affair ended." To this incident the subsequent animosity of Dr Duigenan against Mr Grattan, is traced by the narrator.



In the same year, Mr Grattan had the misfortune to lose a sister whom he affectionately loved; by the tenor of his correspondence, the loss can be inferred to have made the most painful impressions on his deep and somewhat morbid affections.

From the same letters, we are enabled to trace the formation of his peculiar style of oratory, with a distinctness seldom to be attained in such criticism. His ear was caught by the love of that antithetic balance of diction, and that epigrammatic cast of expression, which was the prominent character of his style. It may be, and we believe has been said, that in him this was simply the result of his peculiar character of intellect, as being the aptest vehicle for his condensed remark and epigrammatic vein. And, in a manner this is highly probable: the taste must have some determining motive, and none is so likely as that of strong adaptation. But it is curious to remark the deliberate adoption of such a method before the tone and spirit of his thoughts appear to demand such a vehicle. In every page of these letters, we find the curiously elaborate music of antithesis and point, without any very decided approach to an appropriate relation in the sense; as if he had already conceived the idea of a style, of which he as yet but succeeded generally in the structure—while at the same time, there is in most of those instances, some greater or less indication to mark the intent and conception of a style. We can afford but one example. "Lord North, the chancellor of the exchequer, a man busied in state mystery, and learned in finances, spoke in defence of the court, in a manner impetuous, not rapid; full of cant not melody; and deserved the eulogium of a fervent speaker, not a great one. Grenville, on the part of the opposition, was peevish and wrangling, and provoked those whom he could not defeat." His opinions of books which he expresses with much precision, mostly display much tact and a judgment which was rapidly attaining its maturity.

In 1768, he was deprived of his mother, for whom he entertained the deepest affection. Her death was too sudden to allow of the disposition of a reversion of property which she possessed, and had intended to make in his favour. In consequence of which, it passed to a distant relation.

A more happy event in his family occurred in the same year, when his eldest sister married Mr Gervase Parker Bushe of Kilfane, in the county of Kilkenny. This incident had in some respects a favourable influence on the tenor of his early years, as it placed him at once in a circle which was then, has been ever since, and is indeed still, the most refined and agreeable in Ireland, both on account of the wit, talent, and cultivated taste, which perhaps by fortunate coincidence was concentrated within it, and for the high social polish which generally prevailed. Mr Flood, Mr Langrishe, with Mr Bushe, formed the nucleus of this circle; of which Mr Grattan himself was thenceforward to be a conspicuous ornament. We shall have a further occasion to offer more copious details of this interesting locality, and its inhabitants.\*

\* It is with every sentiment of deep regret and sorrow we have to announce to our readers, that another truly honourable and illustrious name, dear to every friend



In the society to which he was thus introduced, Mr Grattan's genius received fresh incentives. His acquaintance with Mr Flood, productive of lively satisfaction to both, contributed much to his improvement, and gave perhaps a determinate impulse to the taste for political life, which he had already contracted. With Mr Flood, he now pursued his favourite studies with fresh ardour,—as we are told by his son, “they wrote—they argued—they debated together.”

Of the private theatricals, we have already taken some notice, and promised more. Their history belongs to a further division of this work. In these Mr Grattan took a considerable part. He was an admirer and a habitual frequenter of the stage—from which he may be presumed to have drawn much of his peculiar love of action and effect. On one occasion, when Milton's *Comus* was acted at Marley, the seat of Mr Latouche, the epilogue was from Mr Grattan's pen, and does high credit to his poetic talents: from this specimen, we should be inclined to assign him the foremost place as a poet among the eminent members of the eminent public men of his day, among whom it was a favourite amusement to write occasional verses. These lines are happily preserved, and will repay the trouble of looking for them in the memoirs published by his son.\* The reader will be struck by the nervous idiomatic simplicity of the language—the easy, unlaboured, and unencumbered music of the metre—the delicately edged vein of irony which runs through it—and, perhaps, also, the just critical tact of his allusions to the piece.

It is unnecessary to trace minutely his progress at this period. Among the numerous letters published by his son, we find the following characteristic notice of Tinnehinch, the spot where his residence was afterwards fixed:—“I have not forgotten the romantic valley. I look on it with an eye of forecast. It may be the recreation of an active life, or the shelter of an obscure one, &c.” We may generally observe, that the rapid progress of his taste and understanding is very

of elegant literature, or exalted worth, has fallen within the province of our work. The right honourable Charles Kendal Bushe, so long the pride and ornament of the most fastidious and courtly circle in this country, the model of a good landlord, of a finished gentleman, of a kind parent, relation and friend, is now among the brighter recollections of the past: as a judge excelled by none, and equalled by few; as an orator high among the highest of that rare standard class to whom none of the existing public speakers can be compared; as a wit approached by none. His conversation was remarkable for the unsought and unaffected play of a brilliant and rich fancy, which dazzled without wounding—too affluent and too polished to require or to admit of any aid from satire or the flippancy of witticism, and which, without effort, obtrusiveness or pedantry, lent a chaste, refined, and classic glow to the circle enriched by his presence. The same fastidious and cultivated taste that polished his manner and conversation, prevailed in his conduct. The praise of our Irish poet may be applied to his character, with a rare felicity; “for even his failings leaned to virtue's side.” Into his discharge of public duty he carried a sense of honour verging to the limits of infirmity, the true “infirmity of noble minds;” and guarded the stern purity of justice with a spirit more proud and high than the jealousy of Cæsar. He is departed,—the state of society, productive of much good and evil, in which his brilliant character was formed, has long passed away, and it is with a solemn sincerity which disclaims the common cant of rhetoric that we may say with his own favourite classic: “He was a man,—take him for all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again.”

\* Vol. I., p. 146.

observable in these letters; and that in every respect. His taste becomes correct, and his opinions more free from false taste and moral fallacy, which appear to have been at earlier periods the result of a morbid tendency, and the seduction of brilliant but vicious thinkers. In the year 1770, when he was in his twenty-fourth year, he was leading a life of infinite hurry and variety between London, Dublin, and the county of Kilkenny. In the latter place he divided his time between Kilfane and Farmley: in Dublin, he met with too much hospitality and claret for his taste; in London, he says, "My chambers are comfortable and cheerful; they entice me to be domestic and studious." Windsor, too, had, as of old, his visits; and, as of old, he seems there to have found the genius of melancholy, his first love, faithful to the tryst. From hence he writes, "I write this letter from the dullest solitude which ever I have experienced. You know my mind has ever had a hankering after misery; I have cultivated that defect with astonishing success, and have now refined my mind into the most aching sensibility imaginable." A little further there occurs the following singularly accurate description of this state of temper:—"the fact is, I have no resolution, and in solitude feel the most frivolous incidents as great calamities."

It was some time in the year 1771, that he wrote his celebrated character of Chatham; this was inserted in the *Baratinana*. It has been made very generally known, by having afterwards obtained a place in a selection of standard specimens of style for the use of education: in which, if we rightly recollect, it is attributed to lord Chesterfield. The author of the *Baratinana* gave it as an extract from a forthcoming work of Robertson. It displays the most consummate finish of that highly rhetorical style of which Mr Grattan has been, after lord Chatham, the greatest master.

In the autumn of the same year, he had completed his term at the middle temple; and was become more in earnest in his legal studies. One consequence of this new diligence in the study of law was just what the intelligent reader cannot fail to have anticipated—a disgust at that dry factitious science of constructions and pleadings, statutes and precedents. In him, taste, fancy, and enthusiasm, were principles far too active and predominant to be controlled and subdued, as they often are, by graver studies; and thus, while he looked with a fond regret on hours consumed over Pope and Milton; and indulged a high-wrought sensibility by weeping over the works of Gray, who had recently died in the same year, it was not unnatural that he should speak of his detestation of the profession he was about to enter.\*

In September he visited France, and spent some time in Paris, from which he visited Vernon and the banks of the Loire.

In the following year he was called to the bar. For a time he entered seriously on his hard avocation; went circuit, and was engaged in an important suit. His client having been unsuccessful, his romantic generosity of temper prompted him to return half the amount of his fifty guinea fee: with such a disposition, a strong attachment to politics sedulously cherished; with social connexions among the bril-

\* See Life by his Son, Vol. I., p. 247.

liant circle of which lord Charlemont was the centre, and all that was attractive for wit, literature, elegant art, or public spirit, the material; Burgh, Daly, Yelverton, Langrishe, Flood, &c.; Mr Grattan was not very likely to become the more reconciled to the law. So far as we are enabled to draw any inference from his correspondence, we should judge that there was for some time at this interval, an unsettled state of feeling, the result of opposite impulses, which terminated in idleness and a general relaxation of industry, and an impatient sense of weariness, arising from a want of some pursuit to fill his mind, and consume its excess of fuel.

Happily for him, an occasion at last arose, which brought him forward in a manner more adapted to his real character, and affording the appropriate direction to his mind. On the death of lord Charlemont's brother, Mr Grattan was, as we have already had occasion to relate, returned as member of parliament for his lordship's borough.

From this his distinguished career begins. The political history of which his efforts form a considerable part, have been already noticed in our memoirs of Charlemont and Flood, to the full extent that our undertaking demands, or our contracting space can afford. We must therefore assume the reader to be already in possession of the main outline of events, and confine ourselves chiefly to those incidents which are involved with the more immediate object of our memoir.

Of his *debut* in the house, the following notice was taken by the public press of the day:—"Mr Grattan spoke—not a studied speech, but in reply—the spontaneous flow of natural eloquence. Though so young a man, he spoke without hesitation; and, if he keeps to this example, will be a valuable weight in the scale of patriotism." This first effort was on the 15th of December, 1775, four days after taking his seat. He was now in his twenty-ninth year, and may be presumed to have nearly attained the fullest maturity of his intellect.

For several ensuing sessions we find him taking an active part against the government, in concert chiefly with Burgh, Yelverton, and Bushe, and striving against measures oppressive to Irish trade, or pressing for retrenchment. At that period, as we have already described, Ireland was little understood, and less cared for in the English court: her government was conducted more with regard to the interests of England, than her own. A popular spirit had been awakened, and a state of public opinion and feeling, such as to give birth to leading minds, and call forth a long and growing succession of strong and pertinacious struggles with a radically defective constitution of things. So far as the commercial interests of Ireland were concerned, there can be little doubt but that these efforts had a just and legitimate object. In this their ultimate success, favoured by events, was proportioned to these efforts, and Ireland was placed in a position for further advance in that common progress of which she alone among nations had nearly stood still for ages. But, as is incidental to all human effort when connected with party, the struggle carried the combatants too far; and our history is perplexed with actions and reactions, errors and counter errors, injuries inflicted and retorted, which as they afford countenance and sanction to much intentional misrepresentation, so they render it hard to avoid much that



is undesigned. In tracing that course of events, none but a fool will promise to be unerring; but some guidance is to be obtained by keeping in view the great current of tendencies, on which all alike were carried down the turbid stream. With this clue, we trust that there will be a sufficient degree of evidence accompanying an account of several years in which Mr Grattan was a main actor in the scene. The whole is best conveyed in the foregoing observation, of which the truth starts to the eye at every point, "effort carried beyond the point of attainment." When certain points are attained, civil progress is dependent on quiet industry—and not to be accelerated by human policy, or even retarded, unless by the most violent intestinal disorders, the resistance of a people themselves. Trade gathers wealth, and wealth attains influence and power—its natural rights and consequences—as certainly as the bud expands into the flower, and the flower falls into the fruit; this is a part of the nature of things. Had the good and able men who effected the happy result which thus had launched the destinies of the land upon the right way, had the wisdom to look (further than they were by their lights enabled to do,) into the true laws of national increase and prosperity; had they stopped in time, and guarded what they had so well and meritoriously obtained, it had perhaps been fortunate for their country. But, unhappily, the popular spirit which was at first so powerful an instrument in their hands, was not a safe resort; it entered too largely into their counsels, and hurried them beyond the line of safety and prudence. They were hurried on too by the prepossessions of their constitutional theory; they had in view the constitution of England, but failed to appreciate the real state and period of Ireland's immaturity. Admiring the polish, the symmetry, and strong defences of the giant's armour, they tried to fit it to the stripling form of the hopeful child of their love. In this, perhaps, they had not much choice—the popular spirit of the Irish was hard to appease—alert and inflammable, the people have always been especially open to the whisperings of discontent; and while patiently enduring the severest ills, prone to take fire at imaginary grievances and visionary hopes. Hence the perpetual wave which has never fallen into wholesome stillness, though it has at intervals been compelled into the stagnation of inert calm. Thus have triumphs ended in prostrations,

"Vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself,  
And falls on t'other side."

Such is a dimly coloured outline of the order of events now opened to our attention. They will be found in their earlier details in our memoir of Lord Charlemont. We shall now take up our narrative.

We have already in this division of our work entered in some detail into the main political events of the interval to which we have now arrived. And as it is here our intention to advert more specially but to such incidents as immediately concern the subject of this memoir, it may be enough to observe summarily, that the greatest distress and difficulty embarrassed the trade of the country, owing to restrictions now long admitted to be impolitic; at the same time the government lay under the most pressing difficulties, from a condition of their finances amounting to a state bankruptcy, joined with the most lavish and

profligate method by which the government majority was kept up during lord Buckingham's administration, when a stoppage of all payments from the treasury was resorted to. A large sum of money was borrowed from the bank of Mr Latouche, who on a second application for a similar loan very prudently refused. A general discontent prevailed, notwithstanding we have the authority of lord Buckingham himself for stating that there was a strong and zealous loyalty to the king diffused through every rank.

On these considerations it is not necessary to enter particularly. The main occasion for the first and best exertions of Mr Grattan arose out of the wretched condition of Irish trade, at this time restricted and circumscribed on every side;—at home encumbered and discouraged; abroad cut off. In brief, there was a complication of mismanagement and injustice which might be termed flagrant and revolting, if it were not to be excused in some measure by the ignorance by which it was accompanied. It was not understood, how nearly the prosperity of both countries depended on that of either—and upon that union of both, to which the identification of their interests must have been the needful preliminary. It does not seem to have been apprehended, that the wealth of Ireland must be the surest means of extending that of England in every branch of commerce. Nor was it then at all apprehended, that the advancement of the Irish people in civilization must entirely depend on the promotion of the trade of the country.—It is true that among the higher class of English statesmen, notions comparatively enlightened did prevail. But to counteract these there existed among these that wretched ignorance of Ireland which has been attended with the worst consequences at all times, even to the very day in which we write. It is indeed, deeply, awfully important, that the fundamental facts which constituted the great question of Irish trade, as it stood at that interval, should be largely and demonstratively investigated and popularly explained in the present day. Because the main cause of the evils with which Ireland is now affected can be easily traced into the utter ignorance of a people whose intellectual activity has been preternaturally excited and handed over to the guidance of their passions and prejudices. Depressed and poor, they have been elaborately misguided into attributing their sufferings to all causes but those which really produce them; *the depression of the national industry*; and this not from idleness or laziness—for the pre-eminent merit of the Irish people is a natural disposition to industry—but from the disordered and meddling activity, the spirit of interference, of turbulence, of insurrection and blind impulse, which utterly arrests every process of commercial speculation. Would but some wise and beneficent voice whisper to their better sense the expediency of being quiet; explain to them that the wrongs they complain of are not and cannot be the causes of their sufferings; that lesser evils uniformly subside before the influences of advanced civilization; and cannot otherwise be permanently cured; that the permanent fever of the country is itself the disease of Ireland, and that nothing else can prevent our growth to the level of other nations; it would be a far greater benefit than lashing the whole country into convulsions of madness and folly, for insubstantial advantages and visionary wrongs; for complaints which



remind all sober persons of the fable of the lamb and the wolf at the stream; for advantages very like the "three ruffles and no shirt" in the song. But we are carried beyond our brief. In the time of Mr Grattan the case was different; and we are bound to mark this difference, because it concerns us earnestly and anxiously to keep in view the wide yet not equally perceptible distinction to which it appertains,—the distinction between the patriot and the demagogue.

At that time the country was poor, labouring under commercial restrictions which could not fail to keep it so; overtaxed, and its revenue misapplied; every burthen also, rightful or wrongful, to which a penurious peasantry were subject, was aggravated by a cruel and oppressive mode of collecting. Above all was the one great grievance, the source of many others—a parliament dependent, and in all things subservient. Against these unquestionable evils a few eminent men stood firmly and disinterestedly. Men who rejected all the overtures of state corruption, and took an open, unquestionable, and thoroughly disinterested course, labouring for their country, but equally independent of every influence either of power or popularity. Of this small band, Mr Grattan's pre-eminent talent, his heroic independence, fearlessness and incorruptibility, quickly rendered him the efficient parliamentary leader. As we have already stated the main questions in which he took a distinguished part for a considerable interval, we shall, so far as regards facts already detailed, now content ourselves with the general statement, that there occurred no question of any importance in which he did not occupy a prominent and effective position, either as a mover or a principal support; during the whole time he was also uniformly and rapidly gaining a more commanding possession of the public respect and confidence, until he stood clearly at the head, virtually the leader of a party composed of the best mind of his country: the same disinterestedness, unaccommodating integrity; the same courage, promptness and fervid zeal; the same sagacity and eloquence, still to be traced in every act and procedure throughout the whole. For the details we must here refer back to our memoirs of Charlemont and Flood—his contemporaries and allies through many years. In these may be found the origin of the volunteers—the dangers which their presence repelled—the effects of their influence on the politics of their time; the restoration of trade, and lastly that of the Irish Parliament to a nominal independence. The merits of Mr Grattan in the prosecution of these great national changes have not been omitted in our narrative; and the reward conferred by his country, unquestioned by the judgment of his own time or that succeeding, may now be viewed as the strong attestation of the powers and exertions by which it had been earned.

With these observations we now pass over the events of a few years of strenuous and successful labour for Ireland, on the part of Mr Grattan and the illustrious company of eminent orators and statesmen by whom he had been so ably supported. In the interval thus glanced at, Ireland had obtained all that was wanting to raise her to her place among nations, and far more than had been desired by the most sanguine expectations. Mr Grattan himself filled that eminent place in public opinion, and in the judgment of all wise and good men. His abilities,



moderation, resolution, and unparalleled disinterestedness, were not to be misunderstood, when some changes in the public mind began to appear, which may be thought to illustrate the too common absurdity of attributing to the popular mind that wisdom and virtue, which, in truth, cannot often be traced to the counsels and conduct of statesmen. These changes are such also as may help to show how unsafe an instrument popular excitement is, for the furtherance of those improvements which can only be brought to pass effectively and permanently, by means and processes of a very different nature.

By the repeal of the statute 6, George I., the last substantial shackle was struck from the legislature of Ireland, when (as has been said, and we think justly,) the ambition of one eminent individual gave a new impulse to the popular agitation. It was contended by Mr Flood, that the simple repeal was insufficient, and that an express declaratory act should renounce on the part of the English parliament all right to bind Ireland by enactments of whatever kind. Such a declaration must evidently have the effect of affirming one of two things—either that England had committed a usurpation, or that she had possessed the right so renounced; while the simple repeal of the only act which affirmed anything on the subject, evidently left no ground for any question. But the most important objection to such a proceeding was of a different description; it was justly feared by all thoughtful and sober men, that the proposition was likely to impress the English government and people, with the notion (difficult to avoid) of a spirit too exacting to be contented with any measure of concession. It offered another most true and unfortunante exposure, in manifesting the tendency of the Irish people to become the dupes of the demagogue; their constitutional readiness to fancy visionary grievances, and to follow every voice that raises the cry of malcontent. The reality and the aggravated nature of their grievances and distresses, had, until now, masked these constitutional peculiarities; an unhappy train of events, of which this was the beginning, was now to call them forth.

Mr Grattan, as well as the party which thought and acted with him, no less moderate and prudent in the use of success than they had been firm and uncompromising in the pursuit of their great object, steadily withstood Mr Flood's superfluous proposal. But Mr Flood not merely persevered; he had recourse to popular agitation. The people always prompt to take fire, and only ready to lend their ear to those who appeal to their passions—reluctant to stop and prove, and prone to advance indefinitely in the direction of whatever impulse—caught up the cry of "express renunciation," as eagerly as if they understood everything about the question.

Mr Flood was only supported by three votes in the house. Mr Grattan took a decided part in opposition, and proposed a vote that whoever "maintained that Ireland was not independent, was inimical to the peace of both kingdoms." This he withdrew, and moved that leave be refused to bring in the bill, because the sole and exclusive right of legislation in the Irish parliament in all cases, whether internally or externally, hath been already asserted by Ireland, and fully, finally, and irrevocably, acknowledged by the British parliament—which was passed unanimously.

There was an unlucky conjunction of incidents to aggravate the effect of this apparently slight collision. Lord Abingdon proposed a bill in England—strongly asserting the subordination of Ireland to England, as a part of her maritime and commercial empire. Though this bill was not even suffered to lie on the table, it produced its full effect in Ireland. With this, another incident, altogether insignificant in itself, and indeed a matter of course, concurred to aggravate the distemperature of the popular mind. When the bill settling the question of appeals had passed, there happened to remain for decision in the English court of king's bench one case of appeal from Ireland. It had passed through the course of its proceedings, and was in fact only waiting for adjudication. The parties had been put to all the inconveniences of delay and expense attendant on such proceedings; and to any rational person it must have seemed an outrage as well as an extravagant absurdity, that these proceedings should be recommenced, and expenses repeated for the mere satisfaction of a public feeling founded on ignorance. The case had arrived at its termination, and the new law did not in fact apply. The appeal was then a past transaction; the pleadings had begun; the time for pleading the new statute was over; to bring it forward would have been a step not only vexatious, but one for which there existed no provision, and therefore manifestly illegal. Such was the simple fact. As no further appeal could, according to this law, take place, the case could in no way recur, and the question of judicature was uninvolved. Nevertheless, in Ireland it was enough to find the shadow of a grievance or a wrong. This went with the other untoward incidents already described, and excited indications of public discontent, which were most ill-timed, and unfortunate in every way. They seemed to show that in this country public outcries proved nothing but the tendency to excitement; and thus suggested the inutility of concession; the hopelessness of conciliation; and the portentous inference that Ireland could not stand by herself.

To confirm the misapprehensions of the public, the lawyers' corps entered with factious zeal into the outcry for the express renunciation of a declaratory bill; and, with the natural indifference of legal subtlety, drew up an opinion to this effect. This was met by a more sound and authoritative opinion from the ablest and most reputed lawyers of the Irish bar.

The British parliament complied with the unreasonable requisition of a faction. They passed, soon after, the declaratory law required; and by the simple repeal of this, as Mr Grattan observed, "Ireland would have been left in a worse situation than before."

But the one result in which we are immediately concerned was, the strong revulsion of popular feeling against Mr Grattan. It is, indeed, one of the many memorable lessons which history offers on the mutability and the insignificance of popular affections, only to be won by inflaming, and retained by continuing the fever of the public mind. The true and incorruptible patriot, who, in the exigency of real grievance, was ready to devote himself to the cause of his country—who was neither to be bought nor terrified—was little likely to be the dupe or creature of popularity: he who yielded nothing to the influences of



rank, talent, and power, was not to be the puppet of a faction—the *turba Quiritium prava jubentium*. “All Grattan’s services,” writes Mr Hardy, “were thrown into oblivion. The favourite of the 16th of April became, in little more than two months—indeed, long before ‘their shoes were old,’ in following him with loud acclamations—one of the most unpopular men in the kingdom.” That such a man, and such sacrifices and labours, should meet with such a reward, was pronounced by lord Charlemont, writing at the time, “a baseness of ingratitude that surpasses all comprehension.”

Mr Grattan’s health, never of the most robust constitution, suffered by these labours and annoyances. He had suffered from illness during the session. When it was over he complied with the advice of his physicians, and went to try the waters at Spa.

On his return, Mr Grattan married Miss Henrietta Fitzgerald, a young lady of many attractions and endearing qualities. She was on her father’s side a descendant from the ancient family of Desmond. She had been much admired in Dublin for beauty and accomplishment, and merited a higher sentiment for a “rectitude of mind, a purity of thought, a dignity of manner, and a disposition the most amiable and benign.” Her marriage was immediately preceded by a violent illness from which the physician gave up all hopes of her recovery. The severity of the interval to the deep affections and ardent temper of Mr Grattan may be imagined. When, however, the chief medical men of Dublin had given her up, the strenuous affections of her affianced lover discovered a physician whose skill and boldness were blessed with success, and she was restored to him from the clutch of the grave.

His marriage followed; and having thus secured a harbour more safe than the favour of rabbles and factions, Mr Grattan turned his mind toward the spot long selected for a home. He took a temporary lodging at a place called Wingfield, somewhere in the well-known neighbourhood of the Dargle. At one extremity of this glen, only separated by a road from the romantic woods and lawns of Powerscourt, lay, or stood the mansion of Tinnehinch, which had been an inn, the resort of the vast numbers who came attracted by the scenery of the loveliest spot of wood, water, and green grass in Ireland. This was the spot long before selected by Mr Grattan “with an eye of forecast,” for the residence of his future years. Here he presently completed his purchase and began his improvements: but the soil was unfavourable, wet and sandy, and subject from the lowness of the level, to be frequently overlaid with water. At much expense, and by the exertion of considerable ingenuity and labour, Mr Grattan contrived to remedy these disadvantages.

While the calm sunshine of domestic felicity was thus rising upon his home, storms and troubles were thickening for him without. The democratic impulse by which so much had been effected was an instrument which could not be stopped when its work was done; it was a brute force, and the quantity of motion was beyond the control of the movers. The volunteers were become, according to the forcible expressions of Mr Daly—“ready to determine any question in the whole circle of sciences that should be proposed to them, and to



burn every person who doubted their infallibility." In a word, they became tainted with democratic principles, imported from the Jacobin club. Mr Flood, dissatisfied with his own share in the great successes which had been obtained—at variance with all the prominent actors, and filled with animosity against their illustrious leader—was now exercising a late and most pernicious activity, and exciting the volunteers to renewed exertion, when every other true friend of Ireland was anxious to restrain them. The questions which we have just stated, were the immediate pretexts for turning their discontent against Mr Grattan. The Independent Dublin Volunteers, of which he was the colonel, were assembled by Mr Flood their lieutenant-colonel. They presented an address to Mr Grattan, expressive of their opinion on the subject of the "express renunciation," which they supported by the opinion of the lawyers' corps. Mr Grattan replied in a calm, moderate, and dignified tone, expressive of dissent. He stated, that he considered the ceasing of his command, to be the result of this disagreement; but forebore from expressly resigning, lest this might seem "to be an act of unmanly offence," &c., concluding with the just, and in his instance, pathetic observation, "There is a final justice in public opinion, on which I do not fear to stand."

In the year 1783, there was an election, and a new administration. On this latter circumstance, our present narrative requires no special notice. Mr Grattan was returned for the borough of Charlemont. His parliamentary conduct was very much governed by those considerations of which we have taken some pains to possess the reader; the sense that very great concessions had been but just made, that popular exaction was too much excited; and perhaps, withal a sense that the part he had himself taken in extorting so much, and raising so powerful a tone of public spirit, more especially imposed it upon him to show a just moderation and to guard against any ill consequences. With such (most just) impressions, the part he had to perform was one of much delicacy; and perhaps only to be kept clear from imputation, by the character of a man who maintained the most strict and self-denying independence. This was precisely the main feature of Mr Grattan's conduct at the present juncture. He set himself in opposition to the fallacious pertinacity of his countrymen, without any concession to the opposite party; and supported the administration without even the suspicion of a compromise, so far as his reason and sense of right suggested that it was expedient and just.

It was an occasion of this nature which led the way to the celebrated quarrel between him and Mr Flood. Of this there are few readers uninformed, as it remains an oft cited example of parliamentary invective. The main particulars are already stated in this volume, in our notice of Mr Flood.\* It was a motion for retrenchment, made when such a motion was unseasonable, that brought on the collision. It is not to be understood that Mr Grattan was opposed to such a requisition on principle, but he then opposed it because it was simply factious, and likely to convey a pernicious im-

\* P. 220.

pression. Of his motion it may be presumed, that the account offered by his son, is the true one, and received from himself; he "declined to join an opposition of that character, lest it might be said that every effort had been made to gain the affections of the Irish, by a series of concessions, and every experiment had been tried to cultivate these friendly dispositions, but all to no purpose." This just sentiment is indeed one of the lessons of history.

The only consequence of this dispute now to be noticed, was the storm of abuse and misrepresentation, against Mr Grattan, which it drew from the press. The volunteers, under the same influences which we have already related, took a more distinct tone in favour of Mr Flood, who now gave the entire tone to their language and proceedings. We have already given some account of the convention of delegates in Dublin, which took place at this interval of our memoir. We shall only now say, that neither Mr Grattan, nor any of his political associates, joined it. He was labouring at the time to give effect to what had been already done for Ireland, and with this view, endeavoured to maintain and exert an influence where alone at the moment, influence or effort had the slightest chance of being in any way useful; and this was with the government itself. This assumption was either the policy or the pretext upon which his great rival lent himself for many years to the castle, in times, when to do so, was to disarm himself, and at the same time, lend a countenance to much of which he could not approve, while the acceptance of a lucrative office threw a suspicion over his motives. Mr Grattan left no such handle for detraction. He accepted nothing; his motives were remotely clear of every imputation. But now whatever might be the complexion of its political tenets, the administration had adopted the understanding, on which he himself had taken his stand; true and liberal justice to Ireland. Such being the convention of the moment, unless "patriotism" be a term synonymous with "faction," it was obviously the part of the patriot to aid and enlighten its good intentions. Mr Grattan in fact took his stand near the helm—for there alone was his station; but he submitted to no obligation, his aid was sternly exclusive, he would not be bribed, and could not be smiled and bowed out of his principles; he came to give counsel, and under such an understanding that any attempt to control him, on the part of government, could not have occurred. It was indeed the best pledge of the sincerity of government, that his counsel was sought.

At this time there occurred an incident, trifling in itself which may give some idea of Mr Grattan's position with all the parties. An entertainment was given, by G. R. Fitzgerald to the notorious bishop of Bristol, and several of the volunteer officers. Mr Grattan, whom that party were still endeavouring to win to themselves, was invited; he did not belong to the convention, and as the reader is aware, made no secret of his disapprobation. He nevertheless, had never come to any direct opposition with them, and the formal respect of accepting the invitation would have been due to persons of rank and respectability, with many of whom he was moreover on friendly terms. In the course of the evening, the dissatisfaction of this party was excited



by the arrival of a special messenger from Mr Pelham, requesting the presence of Mr Grattan, at a council in the castle. He left the party, but as he was going he received an intimation from a faithful servant of his own, that a mob was collected for the purpose of way-laying him. His life would of course have been the sacrifice, had he fallen in with this atrocious rabble—who in all probability had been set on by their superiors in wickedness. But his mission to the castle, was providentially the means of disappointing the thirst for his blood, and preserving him for his country. The same incident also, in another way proves, the high confidence reposed in the noble integrity of Mr Grattan's character. The party with which he had dined was at the moment, and there is every reason to know on substantial grounds, under strong suspicion of treasonable designs, and that the meeting of the privy council which he that night attended, was for the arrest of their leader the bishop of Bristol. If so, it is not by any means impossible, that this needless act was prevented by Mr Grattan's interposition.

We have already gone in this volume into the history of this faction, its meetings in the Rotundo, its arrogation of legislative power, its attempts to impose its dictation on the Irish parliament. We have also given a sufficient narrative of the result and the debate in the commons on that occasion, when the patriot members though not disapproving of the measure of reform thus proposed, concurred to reject a proposal thus presented at the point of the bayonet.\* We shall now only add, a remark which we shall hereafter have more fully to urge, that the real result of this contumacious effort to prolong their interference, was the actual commencement of a new underworking contest which terminated in the Union; and could not well have failed to lead to that event.

The most truly disagreeable result to Mr Grattan, from the moderate and independent course he had adopted, was a rupture with the good and worthy lord Charlemont. This was the more to be regretted, because he was at the time sitting for the borough of this nobleman. But it could not be avoided; lord Charlemont had recently been treated by the castle with less respect than was due to his character and services, and it is probable that some human mixture of personal feeling entered into his opposition. However this may have been, he entered with zeal into the opposition which, carried as it was into trifles, Mr Grattan at this time thought both unseasonable and unbecoming. There is evidently a tone of wounded pride in the letter which he wrote to Mr Grattan, expressive of his disapprobation, and declaring their friendship at an end. The immediate occasion of this disagreement, was a question relative to an augmentation of the army; which lord Charlemont had recommended Mr Grattan to oppose. Mr Grattan not feeling satisfied under such circumstances, to continue indebted for his seat to one who had taken such a course, immediately purchased a seat from a relation of lord Charlemont's.

The prudence and wisdom of Mr Grattan's conduct, is very clearly illustrated by the character of the changes which can be traced in their

\* P. 202.



beginnings at this period; in fact the wave of excitement had not only as we have already said, survived its direct causes, but as might be anticipated, it had become altered and deteriorated in its material. From the leaders, the work of agitation was now passing into the hands of the subordinates; from the substantial yeomanry, into the rabble. The sublime commotion of the higher elements, had passed away and was attempted to be imitated by something very like a storm in a puddle.—“One would naturally inquire,” said Mr Grattan, “the great call or necessity for all these extraordinary proceedings; one would suppose some great and fundamental principle of the constitution violated; that the principles of the revolution were invaded; &c., &c. . . . . one would not have imagined what is the fact—that this country is in full, free, uninterrupted possession of the benefits of two revolutions, the English and the Irish; of the fruits of every exertion of both nations; that she is more free than ever she was before 1782, and as free as England at any period. I should now like to draw the attention of the house to the alarming measure of drilling the lowest classes of the populace, by which a stain has been put on the character of the volunteers. The old, the original volunteers had become respectable, because they represented the property of the nation; but attempts had been made to arm the poverty of the kingdom.” We have extracted this passage, not merely to do Mr Grattan the justice of expressing in his own language, the view upon which the whole of his conduct is to be rightly understood; but for the authoritative confirmation it seems to offer of the character we attribute to the events of this interval. The same elements from which so much good had been attained, not being allowed to settle, unhappily propagated a movement which was to lead, in the course of no long time, to far different results. But we reserve further remark, until the next succeeding memoirs in which we shall have arrived at those results.

Among the most celebrated of Mr Grattan's efforts in the Irish parliament, occurred upon the well-known question of Mr Orde's commercial propositions. This question had no permanent result; yet to describe the incidents of its discussion, we should enter at some length upon a subject of considerable and complicated detail. Great benefits were offered to Ireland; but, it was thought, at the expense of her legislative independence, and to the disadvantage of English trading interests. These two considerations drew forth very considerable opposition from the several parties who thought themselves affected. The resolutions therefore came to nothing. But Mr Grattan's speech in opposition was the most distinguished on the occasion, and while it raised his character universally, it had the effect of restoring his popularity.

Mr Grattan, still bent on services where they were apparently called for by the state of the country, next turned his attention to the abuses of the tithe system. The question was in many respects clouded by errors and prejudices, which it would be perhaps too much to expect, that Mr Grattan should have seen through. A shrewd observer, and a rapid thinker, it cannot still be pretended that his mind rose clear above the prejudices of his country and time. At that

dark and half-civilized period when the gentry of Ireland are known in general not to have risen much above the lower classes in moral character; when in most parts of the country they exercised a spirit of oppression over the peasantry, now altogether unparalleled, it had been their custom to join in exciting a popular feeling against the clergy; in part because they grudged the stinted income, which they looked on as an unprofitable exaction, but still more because the outcry thus raised was considered to turn the resentment of their tenantry in a safe direction. This spirit was additionally prompted by other causes; the natural hostility of the irreligious to religion, with the differences of creeds, and churches, and the obvious cavils that would arise. From these causes alone (had there been no others,) there would have been enough to account for all the animosity against tithes, which commencing then was long after kept alive. In consequence, all parties then joined heartily in railing against parsons and tithepigs, and by the common art of fabricating, misrepresenting, and miscalculating, a new and fertile grievance arose and swallowed up many which had more foundation. But unhappily the cause of scandal was aided by the effect of one vast abuse; the tithes were collected by means which would have cast an odium on the least unpopular burthen. A class of men called proctors, sprung themselves from the peasantry—and as usually happens in the rise of base-born persons advanced by means of that low talent for intrigue and craft, and that eager sense of self-interest, which stamps the village-lawyer—a personage who bears the same relation to the attorney, as the quack to the regular physician. These persons having their fortunes to make, and no character to lose, with the inhumanity that belongs to such natures, and without the sense of honour or justice which belongs to education, were intrusted with the levy of dues themselves unpopular. The consequence was fraud, and exaction, carried to their fullest extent. And as these crafty persons, having to deal with the simplicity of their employers, and the miserable ignorance of those whom it was their calling to oppress, they cheated both parties with the most impartial knavery. By their superior cunning; by their knowledge of chicanery; and by dexterous management by which they obtained power in the parishes, they enabled themselves to exercise no inconsiderable tyranny, and in addition to their ordinary impositions they contrived to levy no small exactions in the shape of bribes, presents, and treats. Among other curious indications belonging to this state of things, it was usual for the proctor to get drunk in the gradual progress of his daily visitations. They were in a word a pest and a nuisance so great that no system which carried with it such an enormity could be otherwise than odious. But, as we have said, in the peculiar state of Ireland, tithes were themselves an obvious mark for the enmity of hostile churches; and when liable to question and complaint, it was a matter of course that party zeal would accumulate all grievance to augment the torrent of ecclesiastical hate and animosity. The common people, incapable of distinctions, were easily inflamed; and in this time, and upon this question commenced the rise of that agitation which has not yet subsided. Of course every one on every side, who has taken the slightest pains to extricate the subject from the entanglements



of party prejudices and fallacies, is aware that every single part of the case against tithes, (beyond the accidents here stated,) is error in principle, or misstatement in fact. The half-dozen main errors to be noticed would lead us too far; we should have to discuss the questions, What properly constitutes "the people?" What order is the highest, and which is the lowest, and the respective weight due to each? What are the real claims of education—and what those of property? We should have to expose the absurdity contained in the ridiculous phrase of the "religion of the majority;" as if mere brute numbers could have any claim to arrogate any superiority but the one, which they are seldom able to maintain, and that only in the utter dissolution of society, brute force. Were we to demonstrate all this, we should have to counteract the unwelcome inference, by some distinct statements of what the claims of the peasantry of a nation really are. But we are happy to feel our exemption from discussions, which the events of the present day render so nice to touch on.

Mr Grattan's usual sagacity and moderation were shown in the practical character of his propositions upon the subject of tithes. And it may be said to his praise, that he anticipated in principle the better part of the improvements of subsequent legislation at later periods of our history. The speech in which he introduced his motion on the 14th Feb., 1788, is perhaps the most powerful of his parliamentary efforts. It excited strong sensations, and obtained the highest praise on every side. A review of that time noticed that "Mr Grattan took three hours in delivering this speech, in which he displayed the most consummate eloquence, that any assembly whether modern or ancient could perhaps boast of;" . . . "when he came to reason on the subject like a statesman, a philosopher, and a christian, the house was amazed at the blaze of eloquence with which he lighted up the subject," &c. The speech as it yet stands, is indeed a striking specimen of all the best powers of Mr Grattan's eloquence; and, we would say, manifestly displays him in the fullest maturity of his understanding and information. It may also be read to learn a state of opinions, and in some degree, of facts, now long past away. That the measures he then proposed were not adopted, we consider as matter of regret; we have been taught to know that worse might happen from the long accumulations of popular animosity which is the idiosyncrasy of our race and country. But we do not quite concur with the commentary which affirms that subsequent disasters in Ireland would have been in such case avoided. Crimes and madness might have been left with less apology; but they would have been equally committed; for they had other causes, and would have found apology enough in any state of things. It would be well if this fallacy could be well exposed.

One feature of Mr Grattan's statements should be noticed, as it merits high praise. He kept clear of the miserable error, so incidental to parliamentary discussions of questions affecting the church, of speaking in the character of an infidel. His statements did not imply the falsehood of revealed religion, in the assumption that the statesman is essentially exempt from any regard to its obligations.\*

\* See page 122.



Coming forward to remedy great abuses in the church, he maintained the character of a christian.

In the year 1788, he visited London, in consequence of Mrs Grattan's ill health. It was a period of some importance and great interest; at this time George III. was under the first symptoms of that distressing malady which soon after appeared, and proved the source of a severe and trying party collision in Ireland, to which consequences of a more permanent nature have been attributed. In this interval Mr Grattan became acquainted with the Prince of Wales, and lived much among the more distinguished persons who were attached to his court and party. Among others, he had much communication with lord Spencer and Mr Pelham, who were, in case of a regency, to have been trusted with the government of Ireland. A letter to Mr Day, written on the 5th of December, shows that Mr Grattan was at the moment speculating on the representation of the county of Dublin, or of Wicklow.

At this time, there was discernible, the commencement of a strong political reaction in Ireland. Looking abstractedly on the outline of the events which we have had hitherto to relate, such was to be anticipated. An extraconstitutional force, from which in a state of things itself anomalous, many benefits had been derived, still continued to exist. And with it began to be infused other elements of a far more formidable character. It became evident to statesmen, that a change of a dangerous character was to be guarded against; that the patriotism of a few would become subservient to the designs of many, and the folly of the moveable multitude. It became a fair and doubtful question, whether the undisciplined democratic spirit of Ireland would be content with stopping short of any length of self-assertion; and the whole state of appearances was such as to suggest to cautious tempers, the applicability of the old wise maxim of *obsta principiis*. Whether such was a perfectly warrantable sentiment, it is not our part to say. But we think it most essential to put forward, a consideration strongly suggested by the whole course of events, as the ground on which we shall be compelled to take our stand, in justice to several statesmen who are unfairly dealt with in party writings. In this place we shall only add, that adopting such a construction, we on the other side agree so far with popular writers, as to admit that the principle may have been acted on with a vigour and promptness far too irrespective. This too is what must be expected in human policy; statesmen have not in many instances a clear view of the very principles on which they act; their conduct is regulated by maxims and partial experiences and views of expediences; and far more of the nature of impressions than of inferences drawn by exact reasoning from well-defined principle. Such reasonings though easy in speculation which can shape the question, and exclude the cloud of circumstances, becomes enormously difficult, when the real facts are to be extricated from the confusion and vagueness of social phenomena; and when the character and effect of probable incidents are to be taken into account. But we have to remind our reader, that our task is not to decide on the effects of human conduct, but to settle as well as we may the character of the agents. It is enough for us to show that an imputed

offence may have been an error in judgment, should we be compelled to stop at such a point.

At this point of our history, a change is discernible in the temper of the administration; and in the conduct of many who supported them in Ireland. This change has been treated with much patriotic indignation, and we think unfairly. But it ought perhaps to be enough to say, that strong and violent exactions and requisitions which wore the menace of being boundless; combined with some portentous assertions of a self-will not very reconcilable with the future security or agreement of the two kingdoms, were enough to call forth the usual irrespective violence of party.

In the spirit thus conjectured, several very needful measures proposed by Mr Grattan and his friends were now rejected, and the leading supporters of government began to assume a more decided tone of resistance.

The regency question came on. Its discussion was calculated to lead to conclusions highly prejudicial to the claim of Irish independence. It was not merely an exceedingly indiscreet and vapouring flourish of independence, committed with a very manifest want of prudence; but it indicated consequences of indefinite risk. It is no extenuation to show that it could then have no worse effect than to call down on Ireland the resentment (real or imaginary,) of a most crushing party; nor is it any defence to suppose cases. It is enough that it showed the whole extent of a schism between the legislature of Ireland, and the government (legislative and executive,) of Great Britain, when circumstances might arise to call it forth and render it fatal.—But we must return to these considerations—they belong to the entire concluding portion of this period.—Should any one think that we are dealing with these topics, in a manner too brief and peremptory, we must refer them to the memoir of Theobald Wolf Tone, which we shall devote to a full illustration of the political changes and occurrences, which we here but advert to as having some influence on the life and conduct of Mr Grattan.—It will now be enough to observe, that it becomes evident at this particular period, that the policy of government with regard to Ireland became changed in its objects, and consequently in its instrumentalities and the whole plan of procedure adopted. Whether the conclusion on which they acted was rightly or wrongly inferred, it had been inferred from the whole course of the events which we have related, and from every apparent indication, that there was no prospect of realizing the views entertained for Ireland, by the better and more rational of her friends. Everything that was to be seen or heard, seemed to proclaim that the country and its people were far behind the state of maturity adapted to the views of those patriotic and worthy but enthusiastic persons, who had so ably fought her battles in the senate. There were in Ireland, it must be acknowledged, men of learning and genius; there was a polished aristocracy; but in the full sense of the term, there was some reason to suspect that a public was yet wanting,—that though there was a populace, it was yet doubtful whether there was a civilized people. Whatever was just in the language of complaint seemed at a distance to be so mixed up with mischievous extravagance and



frivolous exaction and assumption; the language of triumph and gratitude came across the Irish channel so strangely crossed by democratic menace and denunciation, that it is not fairly to be complained of if the British minister began to conclude that he must find some other way to reduce the torrent to the barriers of civil subjection. He may have erred in judgment, but nearer troubles had already begun to menace, and it was no time for coquetting with an intractable democracy. Such was the outward aspect of appearances.

But making these concessions to the fallibility of human judgment, and these allowances for Mr Pitt; whatever was the principle, a change of policy was adopted. This change was not conformable with Mr Grattan's view of Irish policy, and he rightly directed his efforts against it. It may be asserted that if his policy could have been fairly carried out in its whole extent, the results would have been the best for Ireland, while at the same time, it is open to every doubt as to the possibility of effecting those better purposes. Supposing that with one hand he could have swayed the legislature—it was necessary that with the other he should have calmed the agitated wave of factious commotion, and silenced the noisy, designing, and plotting tongues that kept it alive. He could not, however, be expected to wind and turn with the counsels of those persons who, it must be confessed, thought more of the British empire than of Ireland; and still less could it be presumed that he would consent to be mingled in spirit with the less scrupulous details of the new policy.

In 1790, Mr Grattan was chosen representative of the city of Dublin. In this year, in addition to the changes generally intimated in the foregoing paragraphs, the catholic question is properly said to have had its commencement. As other memoirs may compel us to enter upon this in somewhat more detail, we shall not dwell upon them here. It will suffice to say that Mr Grattan's conduct was, during this interval of his life, which we have thus so slightly glanced through, marked with the same uniform spirit of uncompromising opposition to the policy of which he disapproved, the same strenuous exertion for the welfare of his country, and the same clear separation from the low, frantic, visionary, and spurious patriotism which, as we shall prove was really the origin of all the disasters of the country; neutralizing men like Mr Grattan, and only advancing the interests of venality and unscrupulous ambition.

In the interval occupied by this session, there were many incidents of very considerable interest and importance. We shall have occasion to notice them further on.

In 1797, Mr Grattan, who in the interval had taken the lead of his party in a more ostensible manner than perhaps at any former period, finding the impossibility of pursuing the same uncompromising line of conduct he had till then preserved, seceded from parliament. His motives have been explained by himself at a later period of his life. "The reason why we seceded was, that we did not approve of the conduct of the united men, and we could not approve of the conduct of the government. We were afraid of encouraging the former by making speeches against the latter, and we thought it better in such a case, as we could support neither, to withdraw from both."



It was a moment of severe contention when the struggle between parties was at its height; and when many of those lesser considerations which in ordinary times govern the actions of men, were forced to be laid aside. The magnitude of the evils apprehended; their under-working, secret and indefinite nature; the certainty of a widely diffused conspiracy; the general emergencies which rendered disaffection more than commonly dangerous, were objects which prescribed means of a decisive and strenuous character. It was no time for standing upon principles, when all principle was ready to be shaken; the constitution owes no justice to an armed and conspiring faction, but the justice of felony and treason. An emergency not fully estimated by the wisest men of Mr Grattan's party, and at the present hour not very precisely allowed for but by a few, gave to the counsels of the British minister their utmost vigour, and an external aspect of desperation; a gathering revolution; an empire divided against itself; a wide spread and powerfully organized conspiracy in full communication with the enemies of England. Such was the aspect of the more enlarged field of vision which presented itself to Mr Pitt. The very fact that one so respected, and generally so rightly appreciated by the best men of every party, as Mr Grattan, having fallen for a moment into suspicion, may help to indicate the real force of the suspicions then entertained. That the suspicion of his having any connexion with the United Irishmen was wholly erroneous, we are fully convinced. Against it we put the whole tenor of an honourable life; the man who freely sacrificed the popularity he loved, sooner than assent to the first pardonable deviation of the volunteers, with whom he was himself bound in common honour and common views, was not the accomplice of the low, enraged, and criminal fanatics who had conspired against the peace and honour of Ireland. Against such a charge, the character and word of one whose mind had no peculiarity more eminent than its truth, is with us enough. It is enough that Mr Grattan denied the imputation.

We do not, however, enter into the opinions of those, who found any portion of Mr Grattan's vindication on their hostile views of the character and conduct of the opposite party. To these a debt of justice is indeed due, and has been rendered difficult by the load of misrepresentation, unparalleled in history which oppresses their memory. Faction has long taken up its position on the graves of the most eminent opponents of Mr Grattan—and the very texture of our political idiom in this country, is perplexed and entangled with calumnious recollections. These men and topics cannot be satisfactorily opened in a slight sketch—we cannot say in a few plain words, what will need so much previous statement and explanation to venture upon. In some of the succeeding memoirs, we shall endeavour to show at some length, that concurrently with the events noticed in this, there was a concealed progress of operations working to the most fatal ends, and embracing by no slow degrees the whole popular mind of the kingdom. That Mr Grattan was ignorant of this, may without any derogation from his real merits be easily believed. To this many causes might contribute along with a disposition to think well of those to whom he had been a chosen leader,—he heard from them the language which expressed his own sentiments, for they whose aim was Revolution, in this

instance as in most others, simply avowed a desire for reform.—But his opponents judged more severely, and as will be hereafter seen, more justly, of what was passing; hence their suspicions cannot wholly be condemned. At this period (and this cannot be too strongly impressed on the reader,) the minds of men were heated by no ordinary party struggle; a strife far different even in its objects from the common contentions of public men had nearly reached the highest pitch of exasperation. It was not, as it now seems to be thought, a merely political strife of encroachment on one side, and patriotism on the other, but a rough trial of strength on the edge of Revolution in England, and of bloody rebellion, heightened by the terror of invasion, in Ireland; the season of concessions, conciliations, and discussions, had wholly passed away, and the courtesies and decorums which smooth the brow of faction, and soften the collisions of human pride, passion, and self-interest, had disappeared as under such circumstances they ever will. Mr Pitt, who is accused of not having been a friend to Ireland—but who had in reality done all that friendship dared venture in her behalf, was more a friend to England; but had come to the conclusion which he acted on with the rigid and stern determination which was his virtue. This conclusion we have stated, and shall again more largely. Mr Pitt was, however, but imperfectly acquainted with the real state of Ireland; it would carry us too far from our present intent to show that he could not easily have understood it. But lord Clare who was on the field of strife—who held the same rule of policy on the same grounds, but whose fears, jealousies, and passions, as well perhaps as his personal asperities, were more immediately acted upon and enlisted into the struggle—*may* have acted in a temper more coloured with human gall. We find, as men, no fault with this; when men are in duty and wisdom called on to act a rough and an unpopular part, they must be high indeed above the ordinary level of mankind, if their passions do not become engaged. They are menaced, taunted, and misrepresented, by their opponents. They do not appeal to the public; their adversaries do; and in their entire language, there is implied that they are the supporters and victims of a righteous cause, and their silent and stern opponents, the advocates and actors of everything wrong, base, and criminal. Such language, echoed and re-echoed by the popular press, and loaded with exaggerations, falsehoods, and complaints, grow into popular opinion, supported by a long-drawn tissue of denials and assertions: while the real state of the facts is unknown; while cabinets maintain secrecy; and while the temperate and moderate are silent, so much is said, and so much becomes believed, that even the friends and partisans of the unpopular policy become ashamed to support it. Even the humanity of the good is enlisted in misrepresentation. The martyrs to their own folly and want of principle, must be remembered with charity; poetry weaves garlands for their graves; their names become associated with liberty and other virtues, to which they pretended: it would seem profanation to do them strict justice. Their just judges; the wisdom by which they were baffled; the strict justice by which they were condemned, cannot be cleared from the load of misrepresentation under which it has been overlaid, without seeming to strike down the laurels from the monument of the rebel



or the bloodthirsty fanatic. Had Robespierre been cut off but a stage earlier in his career, and had the French revolution been staid in the outset of its disastrous course, many an atrocious name that sleeps in its infamy would have been deeply blazoned in the scroll of the patriot's memory. Generally, the maintenance of civil order, elicits no imagination, and awakens no enthusiasm: the passions of mankind are all on the side of error and crime; the poet and the rhetorician have ever, and will ever find it easier to be brilliant on the side of human vice and folly, than in the rank of stern and rigid right. Our duty is even justice, and we cannot allow the praise or the defence of Mr Grattan to rest on these quicksands. He must stand on his proper merits, and well he may; and his faults must be excused on true grounds. He was virtually the hero of 1782: he had at that memorable period of Irish history, by great and singular exertions, achieved a constitution for his country; he had, to use his own characteristic language, watched over it in its cradle; he had promoted and fostered its growth; he was doomed to witness its premature decline and death. It was not for him to look with calm impartial statesmanship on the passing away of the splendid structure of his genius and patriotism. It was not for him, with more than the stern virtue of Brutus, to sit in judgment on the child of his better days, and to bid the lictors bind their victim to the stake. His blindness was parental; we might have revered the philosopher, but we should less have loved the man. Mr Grattan's heart was composed of no such rigid material; in him tenderness, devotion, and zeal, were the native elements; he would have died to raise and honour Ireland, but he could not play the stern judge when she stood before the bar of state to be tried on her claim to the very benefits and honours he had himself won for her. It is no impeachment of the wisdom of Mr Grattan, that he of all men looked on with sorrow and indignation, when the project of the Union began to be seriously entertained. Having at this time entered parliament expressly for the purpose of resisting it, we find him in common with several other worthy and able men, in what must now appear to be a false position; that is, pledged by their connexions, or by their opinions, to offer a very violent opposition to measures, which, coolly and impartially seen, must appear to have been imperatively called for by every consideration. One thing must be observed with regret, that their speeches, and those of Mr Grattan among the rest, are deeply intermixed with the particular error we have already described. Error is to be found on either side; but the errors of Mr Grattan, and his friends, are unhappily tinged with the glow of animosity, and barbed with the point of indignant and bitter satire. It was indeed unfortunate that there was ground enough to provoke severity; but the severity was indiscriminately lavished on the men, the measure, and the means. None acquainted with the true history of that period, and taking the whole question in all its bearings into account, will now concur in the sense of the numerous flights of democratic eloquence, which occur in his speeches at this period. Under the influence of the combination of motives and impressions, which we have here endeavoured to expound, it is quite evident that, however erroneously, it



was then not inexcusable if the leaders of the government party did entertain suspicion of Mr Grattan: the position in which he stood to the democratic party was one which, to persons of less firmness, has been ever found to be of a very controlling nature; and, what is not enough noticed, Mr Grattan's strong and not very precisely weighed expressions, were highly favourable to such suspicions. The ornaments of his rhetoric, turned into plain prose and tested by principle, were by no means consistent with his real conduct, and real sentiments. The rebellion which he uniformly deprecated, regretted, and kept aloof from, might have found itself justified in his language often enough. And the opponents with whom he had at the moment to contend, themselves heated by the influence of circumstances, neglected to make the usual allowance for a rhetoric, to which those circumstances lent the unhappy effect of fact and reasoning. In the heat of that fierce contention,—which cannot be correctly appreciated by any one who does not contemplate the disasters which menaced the British Empire, and overturned Europe at the time,—men laid aside ordinary courtesies, and grounds of allowance: the common rules of administration were superseded by urgent necessities; and men acted and felt, as they ever have and will, under the sense of great peril and emergency.

Mr Grattan's reappearance in the house of commons was welcomed by the loud and triumphant gratulation of his party. By his opponents, it was received with anxious apprehension, and a resolution, if possible, to put him down. This was however beyond their power. He was not to be intimidated or repressed, and the emotion of defiance perhaps gave added energy and effect to his conduct. His language was excepted against, and termed treasonable; he repeated it with redoubled force and distinctness. The chancellor of the exchequer attempted to cope with him at his own weapon; he received a memorable lesson, that years had not relaxed or chilled the terrible power under which Mr Flood had been forced to writhe and wither. The collision between Mr Grattan and Mr Corry is yet one of the store anecdotes of conversation,—it is to be met in numerous publications. We shall therefore only state the principal incidents.

Mr Grattan's language had been so strong, that the consequence then usually attendant upon such incidents was generally expected by all present. Mr Grattan himself, on sitting down, observed to general Hutchinson, who sat near him, that he had seen Mr Corry look significantly at colonel Cradock, and expressed his own wish to be prepared with a friend to meet the arrangement thus portended. The Speaker made an effort to interpose his counsel; this, however, was confined to private admonition, and could have scarcely been intended to produce any effect. Mr Grattan observed that he had perceived for some time that a set had been made against him, to pistol him off the question, and that the experiment might as well be tried then as at any other time.

The arrangements were completed without interruption, and the parties proceeded to a field near Ball's Bridge, next morning. It was agreed that they should fire each at his own option. On the first fire. Mr Grattan's ball passed through Mr Corry's coat. The second was

attended by peculiar circumstances, as neither intended to return the other's fire, and consequently when the word was given, there was no fire. Mr Corry then proposed that they should pledge themselves on honour to fire together. On firing, Mr Corry was hit on the left hand, which he had placed so as to guard his right side; and thus perhaps a severer wound was prevented. The affair was thus terminated before the house of commons had yet risen from the debate.

After the Union, Mr Grattan lived for some years in domestic retirement. But in the year 1805, he was returned to parliament for a borough; and in the following year for Dublin. In the British parliament, his appearance was accompanied by the curiosity and anxiety generally attendant on such occasions. There existed among his friends some degree of apprehension about him, founded on the general observation that many eminent orators of the Irish parliament had, on being translated to the English, fallen far below expectation. The style of Mr Grattan had indeed in it much to awaken such fears—it had the fault of being excessively rhetorical: it was the antetype of that most vicious school of oratory, which afterwards sprung up in Ireland, but with this vast difference in its favour—Mr Grattan's style was framed in conformity with the moral and intellectual cast and temper of his mind; he possessed a peculiar method of seeing and shaping his materials; he had even a peculiar selection in the character of those materials; used peculiar artifices in presenting them to hearers; and an intense sense of the feelings and intellect of those to whom his language was addressed. He did not aim to be adorned—pungent and epigrammatic; but all that passed the workshop of his reason and fancy, or was distilled in the alembic of his strong indignation, came forth attired by fancy, or framed in epigram. These were his own native inborn talents; he did not like his followers seek them; to his subject he gave the whole serious attention of a sagacious observation and prompt clear discrimination. There could be no just fear of his failure. In the British parliament he was to come into comparison with orators who had cultivated a more classical style, a few too of higher and broader intellectual power: but none likely to be so powerful or effective, where mere effect was to be produced. His efforts were mainly confined to certain questions; on the popular side of which, he had long attained the mastery of a clear and full possession; and his great power, which lay in the most effective use of his materials, enabled him to avail himself of this, by a forcible and brilliant method, which arranged, condensed, and pointed his statement, so that they at times appear to contain more arguments than sentences.

His *debut* as a speaker in the British parliament was perhaps slightly clouded by the novelty of the situation, and a sympathy with the fears of others. Mr Pitt was intently watched by every eye—he seemed for a while uncertain: but as the orator proceeded, and gathered something of his wonted heat and vigour, the doubts disappeared from the premier's brow, and he was at length heard to express his approval in a strong exclamation which was heard by those who surrounded him. The expression operated as a decision. The approbation of the minister led the judgment of the house, and put an end to any ques-

tions which might arise as to his rank as an orator. "Grattan himself," says the ablest of his biographers, "could not have been without his apprehensions. His style of speaking was altogether different from that to which his new hearers had been habituated. He had neither the masculine energy of Fox, nor the *lucidus ordo* of Pitt; the rich imaginative vein of Burke, his profound philosophy, his magnificent amplification; the sportive, epigrammatic fancy of Sheridan; nor the sterling good sense of Windham, which could not be spoiled even by his own inglorious and fanciful refinements. He was a creature of altogether a different species from any with which that assembly had been previously acquainted."\*

The catholic question may be said to have engrossed the remainder of his life. We do not mean to discuss this question, and for this reason shall not enter very precisely into the details of its history. It is a question, which it would be rash to consider as yet concluded, or its power to agitate these countries at an end. The few remarks which we must needs make must be directed to the statement of what we consider to be the question; this we must do, because we feel bound to say, that the advocates of the Roman church have always more or less displaced their case from its proper grounds; and for very obvious reasons, the mistake was not corrected by their clients. The question has been simply argued on two main grounds, viz., that of common and equal right, and secondly, the consideration of certain objections founded on the history and the supposed principles of the same class. Now, whatever may be the decision to which equity and expediency should come, in the adjustment of the whole question, correctly weighed; these are not the real and proper grounds on which it stands, with those who understand it, among whom we cannot place the illustrious subject of this memoir. This question has no essential connexion with the religious opinions or practices of a class, or their political affection *pro tempore*. The right of opinion, and the freedom of worship have never been, in recent generations, the direct subject of question among persons of any information or authority; nor has the loyalty of the Romanist community, been the actual point in dispute. The real ground of the question—and it could never be rationally discussed on any other—is as to an external jurisdiction claimed and admitted, over the conscience and conduct, such as should under circumstances, be exerted in direct opposition to those laws under which their civil rights subsist,—the only really admissible question as to the existence and extent of such a power. Once admitting its existence, no lawyer, no jurist, will venture to say that such a power is not in all justice liable to be restricted or abated, by the universal self-preserving right which is a primary law of every polity; nor will any one pretend to say that a class subjected to such a power, can equitably claim equality of rights and immunities under a system of polity to which their allegiance is imperfect. Under such assumptions, the assertion of their loyalty would be inadmissible; it may suit the present polity of their external sovereign; nor is the distinction which might be set up to meet such

\* Dublin University Magazine, No. 39.



a statement of this question of any real value; namely, that between civil and spiritual allegiance. The argument from this distinction is overthrown by all precedent; it is just specious enough to impose on perfect ignorance. To be sure, persons of high education, the duke of Norfolk, or the earl of Shrewsbury, may be well supposed to have arrived at some prudent estimate of the limits of two opposing systems of requisition; but the absolute command of the conscience, is, all the world over, the absolute command of the man. In former times, as has been shown in these volumes, such a power has been exerted in this realm. For a long interval it has been passing through a phase of weakness and depression, in which its interest has been to conciliate; and in no case has this interest been more obvious than with regard to England. But perhaps it might be shown by an adversary, that this expediency might be expected to pass away; it would then become a question, where is the security against a power of which it is the boast, that it is not subject to any change of principles. It is not the loyalty of the people—the scriptural conformity of their religion, that ever was to be weighed in the balance of state equity; but the probable and possible policy of the conclave—the absolute and uncontrolled empire of the confessional. The question has been decided for better or worse, or we should here have passed it in silence. We have now no apprehension of giving offence to any class of our readers. The church of Rome has lifted up its head, and, no longer depressed by the policy of caution, can afford to be candid. The argument which was some years since a perilous objection, is now an open pretension involved in the language of those who are to be considered as its accredited organs.

Our object here, in these remarks, is simply to account for not following Mr Grattan through this part of his career, or entering with any fulness on the arguments he used, or the views he had of the question.

Mr Grattan conducted himself with consummate prudence and good taste as a member of the imperial parliament. He avoided the collisions, with the matter-of-fact and perfunctory spirit of the house, which would be the unavoidable result of frequent speeches. His force lay in eloquence which requires occasions of deep interest, and for such in general he reserved his powers.

His courage and true independence, of which we have had to relate instances in the former stages of his life, were again nobly shown in the debate on the Irish insurrection bill, in 1807. The consequence was the same as in former times, when he provoked the animosity of the volunteers by the same disinterested and independent rectitude of conduct. This honourable and manly course was, in the latter instance, fully appreciated, and won him the respect and reverence of all on every side, who could appreciate that which was high and dignified in the character of a public man. The last and perfect test of patriotism which stamps it genuine, and distinguishes the patriot from his base counterfeit—the highest from the lowest, is the contempt of popularity. And this is the crown of Mr Grattan's illustrious record: that he was devoted to the service of his country, and while he fought her battles and was repaid with her applause,

he could turn and rebuke her crimes and scorn her capricious humours.

Again, in 1815, he was placed in a position of similar trial by the strong tone of dictation which the Roman catholic board had assumed towards its advocates. He became entangled in a difference with them on the well-known question of "the veto," and his unpopularity soon rose to a high and tumultuous pitch. In the general election of 1818, when he stood for the city of Dublin, a riotous attempt was made upon his life. It was generally supposed to have been by previous arrangement, that he was furiously attacked by the rabble, as he was borne in a chair (as successful candidate,) over Carlisle bridge. The design, it is thought, was to throw him into the Liffey. He was, happily, surrounded by friends of a higher class, and consequently of nobler mettle than the assailants, who were repelled without any great difficulty—a missile however found its way to his person, and he was severely cut. He caught the ignominious weapon in his hand, and with tranquil scorn tossed it back among the base and cowardly crowd.

His efforts for the service of his countrymen sustained no diminution to the last. Though stung by much ingratitude, and, perhaps, pained by being insultingly set aside by those for whose interests he was the foremost, as he had been the most constant advocate; he was not repelled by unkindness. But still, striving with the fast increasing infirmities of age, he stood forward in the foremost rank. In 1819, he again introduced the catholic question, with a vigour and effect worthy of his best days.

As his motion had been lost but by two votes, it seemed evident that the triumph of his labours was at hand. The next effort might crown his life with the much and eagerly desired success. With this feeling, the near approach—we might say, the visible menace of death standing before him on the road—could not deter his profound zeal and his noble courage. Surrounded by the strong remonstrances of his friends, and his physicians, he embarked for England with his family.

He reached London, but never again took his place in parliament. He died at his house in Baker Street, May, 1820. He was honoured with a public funeral, and a place in Westminster Abbey.

A man like Grattan might demand some general account of his person, manners, attainments, with some summary estimate of his powers. Our space does not admit of this justice; but if it did, we must confess that the task has been rendered insurmountably difficult, by the excellence of the portraiture which has been already given of him, by two writers, who appear, both in manner and matter, to have done the fullest justice to the subject. Lord Brougham's description may be found either in his own work, or where it has been very fitly reprinted, in Mr Grattan's life by his son. Another not less true, just, and full, may be found in a still more accessible source—in the memoir already quoted, in the *Dublin University Magazine*, which, in the style of the press, we may term our able and spirited contemporary. The mind once preoccupied by these two full and forcible delineations must become preoccupied by their strong lines of tint and feature, and can no more work freely on the same tracks. Without pretending therefore to exercise our own criticism on the subject, we shall here simply



bring together the several traits which, in our perusal of his letters, his speeches, and political conduct, and the varied incidents which are related of him, have distinctly impressed themselves upon our notice. But we must premise, that the delineation of character, always difficult, is in this instance peculiarly so. It is always difficult to mark with truth the shades of interfusion which blend, and the still more evanescent boundaries which separate, the numerous and varied oppositions, and inconsistencies which meet in the same man. If thrown together, as is not unusual, into the see-saw of regular antithesis, a figure especially suited to the portraiture of mind, these must too often appear unaccountable, and be attributed to rhetoric more than distinct observation. If, on the contrary, they are stated with a more diffuse regard to the moral laws of human character, they must be expanded by disquisition and become too subtle and refined for interest. These remarks seem to us more especially to apply to Mr Grattan; the moral and intellectual frame of whose mind seems cast on a regular scale of antithesis. If we were to describe Burke—notwithstanding the pre-eminence of his powers, and the force of his moral temper—we should convey one impression in few, and those by no means refined touches: excelling others, his excellences grew out of the magnitude, the intensity, and the fulness of those powers, which separately distinguish other great men; but to the utmost extent to which observation can reach, he is the same throughout. We can speak of his lofty and bright imagination which approaches him to Milton—of his profound speculation and vast knowledge which equals him to Bacon—of his comprehensive benevolence which places him by the side of Howard. The over-concentrated energy of the moral sense, out of which so much to be admired and regretted had its rise, can be more or less identified in all the acts of his life. The magnificent resemblance demands no skilful joining, no nice and subtle distinction. If we find great strength tempered by infirmity, still the qualities are in themselves distinct; the one is not a nice deduction from the intrinsic amount of the other. And thus that great and various mind is intelligible in the whole of its range, to the commonest observation. Like some harmonious physiognomy, its features tell together, and it communicates one impression to the eye. In looking attentively on Mr Grattan, it is otherwise. On every compartment of his mind, there is somewhat peculiar which compels the reader to pause and think—for the purpose of reconciling him to himself. The power and the weakness, the virtue and the infirmity, are side by side, and coexist in the same province of the mind. It would be a task of some length to convey in ordinary terms the precise structure of intellect which could narrow and obscure the political perceptions of so powerful an intellect, in some of the most earnest ends of his public life, while so much admirable skill, judgment, and prudence, appear uniformly in the means. His political theory, if theory he possessed, was evidently composed out of the common mixture of maxims and fallacies of the multitude; and out of this frequently arises the keenness and the force of his rhetoric. His enthymeme, if not just, is the error of his hearers also—he has the impression of the crowd on his side; he has nothing to pave the way for, nothing to distinguish; his blow can be struck,



or his reason given in a keen-edged glittering sentence. Hence the speciousness of the argument and the withering power of the invective. In the most efficient of his appeals to reason, or his most keen inflictions of severity, it may be found on critical examination, that there is far more in the manner than the matter. And such, indeed, is one of the chief causes of the pithy sententiousness of style in which there seem as many reasons as sentences.

To the same class of difficulties may be assigned the exceeding industry with which he made himself master of the most laborious details, when contrasted with the incompleteness of a research so anxious and scrupulous. But his keen sagacity, guided by no breadth of view, was exerted within a prescribed compass: he set out with preconceptions of his result and a predetermined plan, and found the information only which it required. But among these sources of error there was no sordid bias: just, benevolent and patriotic, his failings were not vices, but the imperfections of great virtues and great powers. Fortunately perhaps for his glory, the first stages of his public life were engaged in efforts precisely suited to his nature: the wrongs with which he had to cope, demanded no philosophy to define or destroy; they demanded untiring energy—unflinching courage—incorruptible honour, and overwhelming eloquence. They also demanded judgment, temperance, and the influence with all parties which such qualities can acquire and preserve. And these belonged in a pre-eminent sense to Mr Grattan.

It has been observed by various persons, in various tones of praise or censure, that Mr Grattan's character was mellowed and matured in the British parliament. His native good sense, his shrewdness of tact and habitual observation, together with the critical discernment which in cultivated minds is the probable result of such qualities, were doubtless not exercised in vain. Other concurring influences might be pointed out, as well as incidental circumstances tending to the same effect. But we are compelled to be brief.

For the estimate of the moral conformation of Mr Grattan, the reader of his life will be forcibly struck by indications of the same character which we have ascribed to his intellect. And what is more curious, the same combination of opposite characters will be traced very legibly on the features of his face. The writer of his memoir in the *Dublin University Magazine*, gives a pleasing and true description of the peculiar, bland, playful, gentle and cordial manner and temper, which gave a charm to his whole address and conversation in private life: the representation is borne out with even unusual uniformity by those who have been among his intimates. In his own house he was utterly free from the consciousness of his own claim, and earnest alone in imparting hospitality and good-will, and communicating self-confidence to those who required it. To draw forth intelligence in others, was his habitual gift—and we have heard a young person of considerable intelligence who had on the same day been his guest, observe; that he felt his own mind brightened by the contact with that of his host. Yet with all this overflow of the most kindly sympathies, it seems equally apparent, that there was in his temper a strong and

abundant vein of the most concentrated gall. The same writer above referred to has well pointed out this contrast, and his description of this latter incident is too forcible and true, to be offered in any language but his own. Having given equally true sketches of what Chatham and Burke would have done under the same circumstances, this writer goes on:—"But when Grattan's rage was provoked, the destruction of his victim was as inevitable, as if he came within the spring of a tiger. There were no compunctious relentings about him, by which his consuming wrath might be assuaged or mitigated. He seemed to put off all humanity, and to concentrate every power of his mind, and every faculty of his soul, upon the utter annihilation of that obnoxious being who had been so unfortunate as to provoke his indignation. This gave him at all times a character of ruthless asperity, which was strangely contrasted with the amenity and gentleness by which, in his general intercourse with society, he was so benignly distinguished."\*

The contrast is not unusual in human character: and most persons may find illustrations on a lesser scale. Love and hatred combine often in their deepest excess in the same temperament, and seem to have a fearful affinity for each other, the origin of many tragedies. They are divorced by the religion of the gospel alone.

It would, nevertheless, be unfair not to make one more observation. Every one must at once feel, and admit, that the vehemence of the orator, swelling in the triumph of his art and power, is perhaps too strong and violent an index for the feelings of the man.

## Edmond Sexton Perry—Lord Perry.

BORN A. D. 1719.

EDMOND SEXTON PERRY was the eldest son of the Rev. Stackpole Perry; and his family are mentioned as having been respectable in the city of Limerick. He was bred to the law; and, like most eminent lawyers of his day, presently came into parliament. He first obtained a seat in 1751, and soon became distinguished for eloquence, and still more for knowledge, judgment, and sagacity, of a high order.

In 1771, Mr Ponsonby resigned the chair of the House, to avoid delivering a complimentary address to the lord lieutenant, which under the circumstances he deemed inconsistent with the dignity of the House. In his room Mr Perry was elected, and continued from this date till 1785, to fill that station.

Most of the great measures in favour of the trade and people of Ireland during the interval, were either suggested by his advice, or materially aided by his influence. The following is Mr Grattan's description of him:—"He was more or less a party in all those measures which the pamphlet† condemns; and, indeed, in every great statute and measure that took place in Ireland for the last fifty years. A man of the most legislative capacity I ever knew, and the most

\* University Magazine, No. 39.

† Lord Clare's pamphlet.

comprehensive reach of understanding; with a deep engraven impression of public care, accompanied by a temper which was adamant. In his train is every private virtue which can adorn human nature."

In 1785, on his resignation of the chair of the Commons, he was created viscount Perry of Perry, near Limerick. His lordship having left no male heir, the title became extinct at his death.

## Theobald Wolfe Tone.

BORN A. D. 1763.—DIED A. D. 1798.

A MEMOIR of Theobald Wolfe Tone must be the appropriate preface to the more important part of the history of Ireland which yet remains to be told. It will afford the point of view from which alone many of its events can be fairly judged of. We may, therefore, we trust, stand excused for entering on the incidents of Tone's unfortunate and headlong life at more length than may be thought due. Yet they who have read the ample biography, written by himself and his son, will recollect, that there are not many instances in which the lessons of an awful experience are communicated with the same effect and reality, or in which more true light is cast upon the events of an eventful time.

As such is the object for which Mr Tone is to be here introduced, we must premise somewhat to obviate the great injustice which it is difficult to avoid, in presenting the history of his life in reference to a course of conduct in which he is to be placed in a disadvantageous light. Were he a man of a vicious temper, and debased views, like Sir Phelim O'Neile, a murderer and a brutal despot, urged exclusively by ambitious interests and sordid passions, we should drag him into the witness-box without scruple or delicacy. But Tone was a scholar—a man of the warmest affections and kindest nature—overflowing with goodness, gaiety, and all the most companionable qualities in their highest perfection. Even his misguided patriotism was not without sincerity, it was simply perverted by the errors of his nature. With a temper of mind alive to influences—full of passion, pride, restlessness—love of adventure, impatience of the sober and trite pursuits of life, ingenious, quick, and speculative, yet superficial—composed of those elements, which, according to the direction of a man's walk, constitute the projector, the visionary, or the plain scamp: he had the misfortune to be early associated with persons, scenes, and actions, and to live in days in which these characters were by a curious infelicity combined. Nearly his first entrance into life, with the avowed taste and temper of an adventurer, brought him into a circle deeply tainted with republicanism in its least sober form.

We premise these remarks emphatically, because we must confine our present sketch to the task of tracing him through much that is to be condemned—much imprudence and want of principle—a dishonesty of purpose—and, indeed, a perversion so entire of that portion of the moral sense which is supposed to intimate the practical differences between right and wrong, that there appears a proud un-



consciousness in his avowals of the most flagitious views. It is necessary, to understand this, not to form a meaner opinion of Tone than he deserves: he is in all things guided according to a standard of his own, formed by degrees in the course of an unregulated and adventurous mode of life, in which his natural predilection for a kind of vagrant and scheming activity which is the marked feature of his eccentric disposition, leads him into habits, associations, and rules of conduct, such as might best belong to such a life. This is a slight outline of a picture to be filled up from the life given of himself by Mr Tone and his son, with a degree of frankness and candour of which they, neither of them, seem to be fully aware. Seeing all things in a light of their own, and having their own modes of right and wrong, with the help of a good deal of the revolutionary philosophy which then infected Europe, he and his friends erred with the pride and dignity of Roman virtue, and looked with towering scorn on men who were better and wiser than themselves. They were ready to be the martyrs of their own sense of honour—to die and shed blood for the vindication of the rights they believed in. Their honour covered, indeed, a multitude of sins, in a sense different from the concealments of charity; and their sense of right involved treachery, plunder, and wholesale butchery.

Tone's early life, could we relate it here at length, has all the interest of romantic fiction. His father inherited a small leasehold property near Naas, in the county of Kildare; he was a coachmaker in good business in Dublin, when it fell into his hands, and he set it to a younger brother, which gave rise to litigation, and ended in his ruin. He had several children all remarkable for the same restless temper which we have described. Their history also is quite conformable to such a characteristic nature, and is related by their brother. A few touches may be selected here for the reflex light they cast on the character of the relater. Speaking of one of his brothers, Mr Tone writes:—"He is more temperate in all respects than my brother William or myself, for we both have a strong attachment to pleasure and amusements, and a dash of coxcombry, from which he is totally free." Of William, he says—"He wished, himself, having the true vagrant turn of the family, to go to sea." And, again—"My father and mother were pretty much like other people; but from this short sketch, with what I have to add concerning myself, I think it will appear that their children were not at all like other people, but have had every one of them a wild spirit of adventure," &c.

Having been sent to school to a Mr Darling, though he was exceedingly idle, yet by strong desultory efforts, excited by very considerable love of distinction, he carried away the prizes in every branch of learning; so that Mr Darling pressed on his father to have him prepared for college as a boy of very uncommon talents, who would be sure to obtain a fellowship. This view, he informs us, was also sustained by the parson of the parish, who was sometimes his examiner, and was struck by his progress in Euclid. It having been thus determined that he was to be a fellow, he was transferred to the school of the Rev. William Craig. At this time his father became so completely ruined in his commercial affairs, that he was necessitated to quit business and retire to the country. Still bent on making every sacrifice for a son

whom he had been taught to hope so much for, he determined, out of his own stinted means, to afford him every advantage. Accordingly, not being able to place him as a boarder, he settled for his board with a friend near the school; and even stretched matters so far as to allow him some "trifling sum" for his pocket. Having thus far premised, the only further incident of this part of his life which we shall relate, must be given in his own words—"The superintendence of my father being removed, I began to calculate, that, according to the slow rate chalked out for me by Craig, I could very well do the business of the week in three days, or even two if necessary, and that, consequently, the other two were lawful prizes; I therefore resolved to appropriate three days in the week at least to my amusements, and the others to school, always keeping in the latter three the day of repetition, which included the business of the whole week, by which arrangement I kept my rank with the other boys of my class. I found no difficulty in convincing half a dozen of my schoolfellows, of the justice of this distribution of our time, and by this means we established a regular system of what is called *mitching*, and we continued—being some of the smartest boys at school—to get an ascendancy over the spirit of the master, so that when we entered the school in a body, after one of our days of relaxation, he did not choose to burn his fingers with any one of us," &c. In this little story of schoolboy plotting, and utter insensibility to considerations of duty or honour, is a brief epitome of the writer's life. The opportunity from which this juvenile anticipation of United Irishmen arose, was the ruin of that loving father who had resolved to spare no expense upon a son of such fair promise. The time thus obtained was, indeed, not devoted to any of those vices by which youth is sometimes led astray—as there was a little more than the usual method, so there was more than ordinary discretion in the scamping of this young conspiracy: among other amusements the favourite was a regular attendance upon all field days and reviews in the Phoenix Park. To this Tone traces the "untameable desire which I ever since have had to become a soldier." A consequence was, that, as the time for his entrance into the university drew nigh, his aversion to a college life increased, and he began to display upon the subject an obstinacy equal to the cunning he had previously employed. A violent quarrel with his poor father was the consequence, and his record of this is itself highly characteristic:—"My father was as obstinate as I, as he utterly refused to give me any assistance to follow my scheme." When this shameless sentence was written, the writer knew that his father had made a heavy sacrifice in his own distress to do justice to the promising abilities of his son—and had just been afflicted and incensed by the history of his profligate use of so much kindness, and how wasted it had been. The father was "obstinate," and the son, who had thus outparalleled the prodigal in the parable, was compelled to sit down to his studies "with a bad grace," and with some exertion entered the university in his eighteenth year under the Rev. Dr Matthew Young. This event gave a new impulse to his excitable temper, and he prepared with industry for his first examination. In this, too, his evil star prevailed—"I happened," he says, "to fall into the hands of an egregious dunce, one ———, who, instead of



giving me the premium, which, as best answerer, I undoubtedly merited, awarded it to another," &c. It is right here to observe, that this is a common complaint, and though by some unusual combination of accidents it might happen, it is with such exception always false: it is easy to understand how the very ignorance that causes false answering, may prompt obstinacy in error, and the assumption of being wronged. Something of this runs throughout the history of Mr Tone. However, this matter really was, it gave an unhappy recoil to the vain and irritable mind of Tone. He urged his father to equip him as a volunteer for the American war. "He refused me as before; and, *in revenge*, I would not go near the college, or open a book that was not a military one. In this manner we continued for above a twelvemonth, on *very bad terms as may well be supposed*, without either party relaxing an inch from their determination." The full merit of these records cannot be sufficiently appreciated, unless the reader will bear in mind, that they are the deliberate records, written sixteen years later, for the amusement of his own children. In whatever degree he may have attained the honours of strictly academic industry, it is certain that the charms of his conversation were acknowledged by his youthful associates. We have been assured, by some of the most eminent of his college contemporaries, that his wit was unrivalled by any of those eminent persons of his time, whose names are still currently associated with this quality. And this may, to some extent, be perceived in the style of his diary, in which, at times, under different humours and excitements, grave or gay, his fancy overflows in playful extravagances, pouring out, without the ordinary stimulus of hearers, a profuse stream of sarcasm, humour, fun, and levity, not often equalled. With this qualification, and a light, seemingly careless, and accommodating good nature, he made friends of all who approached him. And it was to these, and to the recollection of these times, that he was afterwards indebted for serious obligations in after years, when the course into which he soon deviated was such as to make it hard to comprehend how he could be so warmly befriended by such men.

Of the remainder of his college course, it will be enough to say, that, though he had the firmness not to give way to affection or duty, Tone was brought back to his college studies by the flattering influence of his friends; and that his progress was accompanied by the ordinary result of great talent and small attention; he obtained a scholarship and three premiums. He was, perhaps, more characteristically distinguished by being second in a duel in which the antagonist of his principal was shot dead.—Tone was not prosecuted.

In 1785, he became acquainted with a young lady, not sixteen years of age, who lived in Grafton street with her grandfather, "a rich old clergyman, of the name of Fanning." He contrived an introduction, and soon won her affections. The following is the edifying example he records for his "boys:"—"My affairs now advanced prosperously; my wife and I grew more passionately fond of each other; and, in a short time, I proposed to her to marry me, without asking consent of any one, knowing well it would be in vain to expect it; she accepted the proposal as frankly as I made it; and one beautiful morning in July, we ran off together and were married."



The step was soon forgiven on all sides. But the thoughts of the fellowship were in consequence abandoned, and the bar was adopted in its stead. Tone graduated in 1786, and resigned his scholarship. Among the honours which his habits had permitted him to obtain, we should have mentioned his medals in the historical society—in which he had risen to the dignity of auditor, which was a post tantamount to the conduct of all its proceedings, and the highest of any permanence, as it lasted for the term. A still higher distinction was the appointment to close the annual session with a speech from the chair.

From the house of his wife's family he represents himself to have been driven by ill treatment to the home of his father, whose affection seems to have withstood every shock. Here, in 1786, an incident occurred, which sets in a very high point of view the courage and affection of his wife. The house was broken into in the night by six armed men: they tied the whole family, and proceeded to pillage for two hours, till a servant maid, having escaped, gave the alarm, and the ruffians made their escape. Tone, who had been tied in the court-yard, with a sentinel over him, was all this time listening in silent horror to the devastation within. When the robbers fled, he recovered his feet; and in his first attempts to ascertain the safety of his wife, he was horror-struck at receiving no answer to his calls. The family, in the distraction of their terrors, had also made their escape, and had gone a considerable distance before they thought of him. His wife returned alone in the darkness of the night—found him, and cut his bonds. "This terrible scene," he says, "besides infinitely distressing us by the heavy loss we sustained, and which my father's circumstances could very ill bear, destroyed in a great degree our domestic enjoyments. I slept continually with a case of pistols under my pillow, and a mouse could not stir, that I was not on my feet," &c.

Notwithstanding the extreme depression of his circumstances, Tone's father contrived to scrape together a sum of money to enable his son to pursue his studies at the Temple. And there could not be a more urgent case of imperative necessity to call forth every feeling of affection and every sentiment of rightful duty, and to give strenuous exertion its utmost impulse, than the situation in which Tone now stood. He was now no more a mitching schoolboy, who might be (under circumstances at least) excused—whose want of consideration could be resolved into want of thought—he was a husband, a father, and an educated man. The only similarity of circumstances was the distress and parental affection from which the means for his present object was wrung. The sacrifice was, indeed, needful, and might be fairly accepted under the trust and hope of a due return, such as every good mind ever feels in such a case, and with a due sense also of the interests of those for whom it had now become his first duty to provide. With this preface we shall make Tone the relator of his own story:—"I set off for London, leaving my wife and daughter with my father, who treated them during my absence with great affection. After a dangerous passage to Liverpool, wherein we ran some risk of being lost, I arrived in London in January, 1787, and immediately entered my name as a student at law, on the books of the Middle Temple; *but*

*this I may say was all the progress I ever made in that profession."* Passing some sentences, he goes on to the nearly incredible declaration—"I was, likewise, *amenable to nobody for my conduct*; and, in consequence, after the first, I never opened a law book," &c. Tone was, as we have stated at the outset, a man of kindly affections and amiable manners: his wife and he lived many years in happiness together; but we think it fully apparent that no sense of duty or obligation—no just regard to any consideration of right and wrong, had the slightest place in his mind. His goodness was the result of strong impulse, but he was inconsiderate, and like all inconsiderate men, was careless, and could be both unjust and cruel in cold detail. Exceeding levity is prominent throughout, and makes him appear better and worse than the reality.

Anxious to extend his resources, and to maintain the appearance of a gentleman, Tone now exerted his talents for the purpose, and continued to extract some pounds by contributions to the magazines, during the two years of his London sojourn. He was still more indebted to the generosity of some of his associates, from one of whom, John Stevenson Hall, he acknowledges to have received £150 in some pecuniary difficulty. We shall not delay to extract from this fact some very obvious reflections, which might go to aggravate the strictures already pronounced.

But under all these circumstances, neither the life of pleasure that Tone was leading, nor the essential levity of his nature, could conceal from him that something must be done to save a poor man from penury—a vain man from utter shame. In the intervals of dissipation, he, perhaps, recollected the claims of his family, and the expectations of his friends. He determined upon a great stroke, worthy of his genius, and which might place him, *per saltum*, upon the stage of prosperous exaltation. He formed and drew up proposals for a scheme, for the government to establish a colony in one of Cook's islands in the South Seas, "in order to put a bridle on Spain in time of peace, and to annoy her grievously in that quarter in time of war":—in arranging this plan he read all books which could throw light on the subject, "and especially the *Buccaniers*, who were my heroes, and whom I proposed to myself as the archetypes of the future colonists." We have only to add, that he intended himself to play the hero after these classical models of his selection. Could we within our limits convey to our readers all that such a plan and such a design imply, we should have a much simpler task in laying bare the spirit of Tone's life. But the history of the *Buccaniers* is not now much known—it is a fearful illustration of all the worst parts of human nature, and cannot be studied without disgust or contamination. But we should add, there are ample indications that the wild and lawless freedom, and the reckless spirit of adventure, was the real charm for Mr Tone's mind.

Having reduced his plan to a memorial drawn up with great care and talent, he sent it to Mr Pitt. Mr Pitt took no notice of it; and we are thus conducted to the next point of moment in this memoir. "It was," says Tone, "my first essay in what I may call politics, and my disappointment made such an impression on me, as is not *yet quite obliterated*. In my anger, I made something like a vow, that if I ever

had the opportunity, *I would make Mr Pitt sorry*, and perhaps fortune may yet enable me to fulfil that resolution." When the after circumstances of Tone's life are remembered, there is something strangely solemn in a diary, which some evil genius would seem to have whispered to his breast.

About this time, he received a letter from his father, filled with complaints, "which he afterwards found were much exaggerated." The immediate effect was a fit of ungovernable resentment, and his vindictive feelings against Mr Pitt were for a moment forgotten, in his rage against his father whose love he had so basely betrayed. He resolved in the vindictive fury of his heart to cast away all ties, and sacrifice all prospects, for the satisfaction of wounding the breast which had cherished his wayward youth, and would still protect him from himself. He resolved to enlist in the India service. Unfortunately—for it had been better for him—he met with a disappointment. On his arrival at the India house, he ascertained that he had come too late for that year, but might be received and sent out on the next.

He returned home and was called to the bar, with the purest ignorance of law; but as £500 of his wife's fortune was now paid, he laid out £100 in law books, and for some time was assiduous in his attention to the courts. It is unnecessary to detail the incidents of his legal career; it was short and unproductive; though his natural talent, address and manner, and the extended acquaintance which he had among the members of the profession, were the means of obtaining him more, both of notice and employment, than could fall to most beginners.

Feeling a very reasonable despair of professional success, and a still increasing hatred to the study of law, he now decidedly turned his thoughts to politics, and tried his hand upon a pamphlet in defence of the whig club, of which he observes in his diary, "though I was very far from entirely approving the system," and that he yet agreed with them so far as they went, "though my own private opinions went infinitely farther." His pamphlet had some success, for the Northern Whig Club reprinted it for distribution, and afterwards discovering the author, elected him one of their body. Another consequence was, his being retained in a heavy suit by the Ponsonbys, one of whose political connexions made very promising overtures to him, and led him to hope for great advantages. In consequence, he attached himself to the whig club for a little time. But he soon found that his expectations were likely to lead to nothing beyond the fee of eighty guineas, which he had received. Mr George Ponsonby was very civil to him whenever they met, but never said a word on politics. He therefore resolved to abandon this party as hopeless. "But," he adds, "my mind had now got a turn for politics, I thought I had at last found my element, and I plunged into it with eagerness." This was, indeed, a discovery for one whose views had already gone "infinitely farther" than the whigs, and may help to illustrate the great care, study, and deliberation, which had been employed in the formation of those views. We are not, indeed, long left in further doubt as to their nature and extent: he mentions on the same page, "I made speedily what was to me a great discovery, though I might have found it in Swift and



Molyneux, that the influence of England was the radical vice of our government, and consequently, that Ireland would never be either free, prosperous, or happy, until she was independent, and that independence was unattainable, *whilst the connexion with England existed.*" "This theory," he adds, "has ever since directed my political conduct." This was the virtual commencement of Mr Tone's career, and the germ of many woes to him and to his country. It was about the year 1790. The reasonings by which the delusion of his life was maintained, drop out from page to page; but demand no repetition, as they consist entirely of those popular notions—true or false, or falsely understood,—in which democratic factions are entirely conversant.

We have now traced Tone to the full-grown stature and maturity of his theory; and, though it is to be admitted, that there is to be found no great indication of the power or labour with which the ultimate theories of great statesmen are formed; yet it will be remarkably exemplified in the dexterity, address, practical talent, and constancy, with which he adhered to it, how much talent and efficiency may coexist with so little true wisdom. The secret of his strength lay in the superficial texture of his reasons, and the ignorance of his associates. With his newly acquired theory, Tone's character seems to change—the folly and insignificance which glitter like froth over the previous pages of his diary, seem to be lost in the consciousness of a great congenial purpose. Ireland rose on his imagination in place of the South Sea islands, and his favourite Buccaneers found a captivating place in the long perspective of an Irish revolution. Those who had slighted his plans, or his abilities, were now, he thought, to learn by experience, the man they had lost. But we may be thought to anticipate events, while thus tracing out the fast blowing tendencies, not obscurely indicated in the preceding pages.

"An occasion soon offered," writes Mr Tone, "to give vent to my new opinions. On the appearance of a rupture with Spain, I wrote a pamphlet to prove, that Ireland was not bound by the declaration of war; but might, and ought, to stipulate for a neutrality. In examining this question, I advanced the question of separation, with scarcely any reserve, much less disguise." The blow was evidently well meant and heartily given; and it cannot be admitted, that the author expected no result. "But," he adds, "the public mind was by no means so far advanced as I was, and my pamphlet made not the smallest impression." The pamphlet was, nevertheless, read by many persons of known public character, and Tone heard some unpalatable truths in his bookseller's shop. We may here, in passing, recall to the reader's recollection, that this very pamphlet was in a high degree adapted for the suggestion of some of those apprehensions which are said to have led to the union. And by indicating the views of an extreme party, which soon after began to make its appearance, it certainly offered no slight probability of the verification of such fears. And this, more especially, when there afterwards appeared to exist in the public mind of this country an indefinite and growing spirit of requisition, plentifully accompanied by such indications as the language and publication here mentioned.

At this period he formed a close friendship with a gentleman of the

name of Russel, whose name must often recur in this memoir. For the present, it may be enough to state, that Mr Tone describes his character as being suited to his own by an "identity of sentiment."

If our space afforded, we could here present the reader with a striking view of social life, well painted in Mr Tone's pages. In the summer of 1790, he took "a little box on the seaside at Irishtown." Here his family, his friend Russel, and occasionally his brothers, were accustomed to meet. Wit, politics, and gay conviviality, gave a charm to the days they passed together, and to the "delicious dinners, in the preparation of which, my wife, Russel, and myself, were all engaged." There was surely something of a wild unfettered character in those half-gypsy merry-makings which must have harmonized richly with the bold background of Mr Tone's visions of future glory.

During this interval, one more chance of realizing the first and favourite day-dream of his heart seemed to offer itself. The strong appearances of a rupture with Spain, and the advice of Russel, induced Mr Tone to renew his suggestions to the British government on the Buccaniering scheme. The ministers seemed to approve of his plan, which not only showed talent, but indicated a serviceable agent, in case such a design might be adopted. He now received answers of at least a considerate and approving kind, which for a moment awakened his hopes. But the whole came to nothing, and we come to the comment, which is happily characteristic—"If the measure we proposed had been adopted, we were both determined on going out with the expedition, in which case, instead of *planning revolutions in our own country*, we might be now, perhaps, carrying on a privateering war (for which, I think, *we both have talents*,) on the coasts of Spanish America." After a sentence more, he adds, "The minister's refusal did not sweeten us towards him. I renewed the vow I had once before made, to make him, if I could, repent of it, in which Russel most heartily concurred. *Perhaps the minister may yet have reason to wish he had let us go off quietly to the South Seas.* I should be glad to have an opportunity to remind him of his old correspondent; and if I ever find one, I will not overlook it. I dare say, he has utterly forgot the circumstances, but I have not." If there be any value in expression, these are the deep breathings of the slowhound revenge.

But we have, perhaps, sufficiently ascertained the political tendencies of Mr Tone; and in some degree, also, the spirit in which his career was to commence. Talented and endowed with much social amiability as he was; and kindly as seems to have been the impression he has left on the memory of many highly estimable men, we are bound to say, that there was no public virtue, much less heroism, in his character; and, that so far as we have traced him, his motives were those of an undisciplined understanding, and a disordered heart—of wild romance, and deeply seated revenge—a love of active emergency and confusion—with an animosity against order and settled authority. That such a temper can easily discover pretexts in any state of things, is not very hard to perceive. But in Ireland, placed as it was in a most anomalous position; with a political constitution, replete with the heterogeneous elements of collision—a vitiated frame of polity—and a people comparatively backward in civil progress; it might be anticipated that



such motives and such opinions would easily find for themselves the materials for a specious assumption of dignified motive. It was easy for Mr Tone, with Russel and a few more, as wrongheaded, and as enthusiastic in error as himself, to weigh every institution of society in a false balance against their visionary tenets, and to find them wanting; and to seize on every crime or suffering, wrong, or impolicy—in a word, on all the evils inseparable from humanity, and fling them in a mass into the same scale. And this is precisely the point to be cleared in this memoir: for which purpose our endeavour must be, so far as can now be done, to separate many facts of which the character has been materially altered by confusing them together.

In reading such statements as Mr Tone's memoir, a curious problem offers itself—often, indeed, suggested in the course of human observation. The deepest-dyed impostor—so long as he is persuaded that his knaveries are not detected—will meet suspicion and reproach with the sincere resentment of injured innocence. He will vindicate the rights of virtue, and feel even something of its pride. He will, even in the communings of his own breast, draw together the excuses, palliatives, and justifications of himself, and weave them into a theory of virtue: he will set up many a screen between his mind's eye and its purposes. And thus he may, in a book like Mr Tone's, give an account of himself and his motives, so speciously put together, as to impose on many of his readers the semblance of a fair case.

For a man, and a cause like those brought together here, this is not more a principle of exposure than of apology. It saves us from the necessity of imputing the unslaked wickedness and baseness which seem to us to be the common sense reading of Mr Tone's memoirs. While at every page he more or less exhibits strong grounds for the system of policy adopted by the government, he at the same time adopts a uniform tone of vindictive language, which assumes that there were no such grounds. With similar inconsistency, after the clearest exposure of his own designs, he afterwards insinuates what his son directly, and in the teeth of facts asserts, that his designs grew out of certain after events. After a long course of evasions and plottings, mixed up with most degrading levities, we find the manly firmness and the dignified self-respect of a Cato. If, instead of politics, we were engaged in a moral analysis, no illustration could be more complete of the deep-seated contrarieties of the human heart;—the impulse to wrong and the respect for right: let a crime be but susceptible of the specious show of virtue, and the deepest villany will stand erect, unblushing, and self-justified.

In 1791, we have the following statement from Mr Tone:—"To subvert the tyranny of our execrable government—to break the connexion with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils—and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects;"—objects already explained by ample self-revelations adverted to in the foregoing pages. For these objects, the means stated are the union of all classes of Irishmen, (p. 52.) The nature of *this union*, is described indirectly in a few sentences, in which he states his reason for not addressing himself to the Roman catholic, and says, "I know well, that however it might be disguised or suppressed, there existed



in the breast of every Irish catholic an inextirpable abhorrence of the English name and power." How far this assertion is calumnious or true, is not the immediate consideration: the church of Rome is not here upon its trial. It is now mentioned to indicate the *animus* of the proposed union. It is necessary that the reader should bear this fact in mind, because it afterwards becomes a specious pretence, and is put forward separate from its motive. In a kingdom so manifestly degraded and harassed by its dissensions, what could seem more wise or laudable than the desire to promote union. But the word was a party phrase for *confederacy*. We may here, in passing, notice that it is after the Relief Bill, in 1793, when a sentiment of gratitude and loyalty had shown itself among the Roman catholics, that he is represented as entertaining and endeavouring to communicate feelings of indignant despair; and when, by the avowed efforts of himself and his friends, the tone of grievance is once more well put in motion, he is represented (no doubt on his own authority,) by his son as for the first time taking fire: then came the idea "to break the connexion between the two countries. This idea had often mingled with the dreams of my father's youth; but he, then, *for the first time*, began to consider it seriously." We have underlined the singular assertion of a falsehood as careless and impudent as we ever recollect to have met.

In the not very long interval between the statements thus brought into contact, Mr Tone had not been idle. In 1791, he published a pamphlet, under the signature of a Northern Whig, purporting to be "an argument in behalf of the catholics of Ireland," in which the whole basis on which he argues is the implication of the principles of the French Revolution:—the real or supposed apprehensions derived from their connexion with Rome, he answers by appealing to the event in France, and by assertions which no sincere Roman catholic would admit. And his ultimate reply to each objection always assumes the separation from England, and the entire remodelling of a constitution. Of these indirect exposures he seems quite unconscious; and while he appears to have guarded against gross direct avowals, his mind was so saturated with revolutionary opinion, that it escapes unheeded by himself, (and not understood by his biographer,) in every paragraph of this tract. But his hints are often more sincere. He says, that it is not his plan here to examine the question of independent existence—"I trust, when the necessity does arise, as at some time it *infallibly must*;" and if any one should question its possibility, he points out the answer which time has given, "by bringing forth that stupendous event, the revolution of France," &c. Such was the portentous appeal which first raised Mr Tone to great and popular publicity. It was distributed in all quarters, and large editions were immediately printed by different bodies, and scattered like wild-fire through the kingdom. It introduced Mr Tone to the principal persons with whom we find him acting during the remainder of his Irish career. "As my pamphlet spread more and more, my acquaintance among the catholics extended accordingly. My first friend in this body was John Keogh, and through him I became acquainted with all the leaders, as Richard M'Cormick, John Sweetman, Edward Byrne, Thomas Brangnall, in short the whole sub-committee, and most of the active members of the general committee."

The volunteers of Belfast, "of the first or green company, were pleased in consequence of my pamphlet, to elect me an honorary member of their corps." He adds, "I was also invited to spend a few days in Belfast, in order to assist in framing the first club of United Irishmen."

Much must needs be passed by in a memoir intended to be short, but growing beyond all due limits. Mr Tone makes it quite apparent that the United Irishmen, of which the body was variously composed, was headed by men of republican principles—that it branched with surprising rapidity;—and, that, though its *ostensible* requisitions and complaints were some just and all allowable, the sentiments expressed, and the arguments put forth, breathe the spirit of the leading men. This is, indeed, the main point to be illustrated by the life of Mr Tone, and it may therefore be expedient to pause for a moment on those considerations. There was not only, at this point of time, a strong infusion of republican opinions pervading the north, and, through the medium of the volunteers, spread into every corner of the kingdom where there could be found the requisite degree of intelligence; but there was also a very peculiar preparation for the reception of such principles. Centuries of insurrection and insurrectionary tradition, with, perhaps, some native propensities, had communicated military instincts to the Irish peasantry; conspiracies and armed associations were the fertile growth of the soil—whatever excitement was by any means communicated, quickly assumed this indigenous type. We shall now go back no farther than a few years from the date in which we are engaged. In or about 1762, the Whiteboys were associated by an oath, which most clearly manifests the real internal character of that association. The following is the oath:—

"I do hereby solemnly and sincerely swear, that I will not *make known any secret* now given me, or that hereafter may be given me, to any one in the world, except a sworn person belonging to the society called Whiteboys, or otherwise, Sive Ultagh's Children.

"Furthermore, I swear that I will be ready at an hour's warning, (if possible,) being properly summoned by any of the *officers, serjeants, or corporals, belonging to my company.*

"Furthermore, I swear that I will not wrong any of the company I belong to of the value of one shilling; nor suffer it to be done by others, without acquainting them thereof.

"Furthermore, I swear that I will not make known, in any shape whatever, to any person that does not belong to us, the name or names of any of our fraternity; but *particularly the names of our respective officers.*

"Lastly, I swear that I will not drink of any liquor whatever, *whilst on duty*, without the consent of the *officers, serjeants, or corporals*; and that we will be loyal to one another as far as in our power lies."

The purport of this oath is plain enough—it simply secures secrecy and military obedience. It also ascertains a system of officers, serjeants, and corporals. It contains no provision that does not evidently regard these objects. It also clearly indicates the instrumentality of persons of education; and a purpose not unreservedly committed to the lower class, the rank and file of conspiracy. Certain agrarian discontents were made the immediate pretexts for organizing the lower classes, and



the cover for the ulterior purposes of their leaders or misleaders. The same character, may be traced in all the similar associations, arising successively under different names, and having similar pretexts concealing similar organizations. But our only concern with these is to point out the channels through which the principles of republicanism now began to be propagated with the most active zeal. We ought also to call the reader's attention to another circumstance which helped to mark its first advances. Republican principles had so very largely spread in the form of mere opinions among the upper classes, that very dangerous language could be spoken and written without attracting much notice, or appearing to warrant any conclusion. Parliamentary reform, which, even in England, all wise men opposed, was taken up by some leaders of the opposition in Ireland. It afforded a pretext of the most effective description, as it could be made to involve the whole compass of republicanism. The question of catholic emancipation, about which the people were wholly indifferent, was evidently a good pretext for meetings, associations, and for the gradual excitement of a popular sensation. We now return to Mr Tone. His pamphlet obtained a degree of public applause, wholly due to the echo of republican sentiments; and the fact is itself important, as an indication not to be lightly passed by without observing the strong confirmation it thus affords of the statements we offer with regard to public feeling: such, in fact, are the only sure indications of a past state of things. In this much applauded pamphlet,—at once adopted, republished, and circulated, by so many associations—there is nothing to claim such a compliment but the republican tone of sentiment; it spoke out what so many felt, and so few had the courage to say. He went, indeed, so far as to be reproved for his indiscretion by many: he mentions one instance in which he was remonstrated with by a whig barrister—the same who had before retained his services for the Ponsonbys; and if any one will take the trouble to read attentively the history of that conference, and his own reflections upon it, (p. 59,) too long to be extracted, a suspicion will arise that Mr Tone would have sold his support, if his own terms had been complied with. Though he often and strongly animadverts upon the indiscretion of others, Mr Tone is very far from discreet. Indeed, it would have cost too much disguise, and required a depth beyond his nature.

But having now endeavoured to trace the general state of the people, from which the conspiracy of the United Irishmen derived its materials, character, and means of rapid diffusion, it will next be desirable to show in fact its strict affinity to previous conspiracies. This may be briefly done by the simple statement of the plan and form of the society of United Irishmen. In 1791, a prospectus first proposed it, and stated its general objects. It was to “have much of the secrecy and somewhat of the ceremonial attached to freemasonry,” of which a main object is stated to be that it may “animate his [man's] *philosophy* by the energy of his passions.” It then states certain ostensible views already noticed. It then proposes the means and instrumentalities to be resorted to—“publication, in order to propagate their principles,” &c.—and this point deserves attention, because it ascertains the connexion between them and their writings, which are mainly directed to



republicanism. Passing some points, we come to the following: "communication with *similar* societies abroad: as the *Jacobin Club* in Paris; the *Revolution Society* in England," &c. This plain statement renders further remark needless; so we may go at once to their adopted discipline. As it was an object to reconcile all classes of malcontents, and not to reveal their secret purposes to the body at large, the oath to be taken simply regarded those ostensible objects which revealed nothing, though well adapted to lead to the essential end—it pledged them to union in the pursuit of parliamentary reform. This was the great pretext, well kept up throughout, nearly till the time when, all being discovered, it became their apology. Their constitution, according to the description of Dr M'Nevin, was the following:—"It consisted of societies, at first composed of thirty-six members; afterwards these societies were reduced to twelve members; each society of twelve chose a secretary, and generally a treasurer. The secretaries of five societies formed a lower baronial committee, out of each of these [we omit repetition of terms] one person was chosen to be a member of the upper baronial, each of which consisted of twelve members so chosen. In populous towns there were district committees; and in counties, county committees—these were composed by choosing one member from each baronial. Next above these were the provincial committees, composed of two, and sometimes three, from each county committee. The provincial committees elected five persons by ballot: the secretary examined the ballots, and reported to the persons elected their appointment, but made no report of their election to the provincials, who were thus kept in ignorance of the persons who composed the executive," &c. The rest describes the method of communication downwards from step to step, through the several ranks thus described. M'Nevin states this organization to have been originally civil, but to have become military in Ulster, about the end of 1796, and subsequently everywhere else, when the real object, till then confined to the initiated, became openly professed throughout the body—this was "to effect a revolution, and establish a republic." The reader will have perceived that the main structure of this complicated system was elaborately designed to guard a *secret*, only to be known from the *animus* of the party. There was no *secrecy observed about reform*; and, as we have already observed, all the arguments and the whole drift of their literary manifestoes, pointed to the *further object* ultimately avowed. To prove this by lengthened extracts would take too much space. But we may mention, that the declaration which they published in October, 1791, commences with an unguarded preamble, referring to the "rights of men" as then "ascertained in theory, and that theory substantiated by practice;" and by this and other phrases, referring the motive of their association to the example of the French revolution, "the present great era of reform, when unjust governments are falling in every quarter of Europe." It was, of course, not possible, that an extensive confederacy should cover the kingdom for six years, and continue to adopt such evidently equivocal proceedings, without communicating the utmost alarm to the peaceful, and above all, in a country like this. Nor can any one, possessing an ordinary share of common sense, imagine that it could be suffered to proceed unquestioned.

The government took a well-founded alarm; and all those who were either opposed to, or terrified by, these rather plain proceedings, took steps which Mr Tone does not fail to brand with strong vituperation. It was then, as it has ever been, a most impudent fallacy among such men, that their own formal pretences are to be taken for granted, and anything committed to the privacy of a playhouse whisper in their private language not to be understood. Unfortunately for these reasonable pretensions, admissions like this slip out. "In order more effectually to spread their principles, twelve of the most active and intelligent among them subscribed £250 each, in order to set on foot a paper, whose object should be to give a fair statement of all that passed in France, whither every one turned their eyes:"—enumerating the various doctrines to be inculcated, the last is, "and finally, as the *necessary, though not avowed consequence of all this*, to erect Ireland into a republic." But the opposite party, spread through Ireland, and even for the greater part, in the very focus of these plans, were to know nothing of all this; the government was to stand hoodwinked by some unaccountable blindness. Reason was to stand still at a certain point—human fears were to be soothed by open humbug—and the strong sense of interests and duties, to be cajoled into a criminal passiveness by the shallow evasions of the *Northern Star*, and those whom it spoke for. These symptoms were not confined to speeches and squibs; the commemoration of the taking of the Bastille gave rather an unequivocal indication of the tendency of the time. But, indeed, our present purpose requires not that we should dwell on any circumstance, with a view to make the most of it: the singular indiscretion of the entire of Mr Tone's party and friends, and their total absence of anything like politic reserve, offers proof, *ex abundanti*, as to the fact, that not a step of their progress in disaffection, and scarcely a word could have been concealed from any one but the most ignorant. Mr Tone's book, as it proceeds, becomes more motleyed with the uniform self-contradictions in which he delights to dwell. If one sentence pours scorn upon the authorities for their suspicions, the next justifies them. We shall take a few extracts from his diary, a little farther on:—"August 1st, [1792.] Busy all day folding papers for the Munster bishops. Damn all bishops! Gog not quite well on that point; thinks them a good thing. Nonsense. Dine at home with Neilson and M'Cracken, very pleasant. Rights of man. French revolution. No bishops," &c. It may not be superfluous to apprise many of our readers, that the letters here mentioned are for the Roman catholic bishops: Gog was their cant name for Mr Keogh, a Roman catholic, and sincere in his religion, though evidently a democrat; he is mentioned by those who knew the men and the times, to have been the ablest and best of the set to which he belonged.

On the 9th of the same month, Mr Tone found some reason to relax in his antipathy to bishops, as his journal for that day runs:—"Dined with Dr Reilly, the primate; Plunket, bishop of Meath; Reilly, bishop of Clogher; Cruise, bishop of Ardagh, &c., [to the number of eight bishops,] all very pleasant sensible men. Dr Plunket, the first; think he would be a credit to any situation. All well on the catholic question. *The matter as to the north now settled.* More and more admire



Dr Plunket; glad to find the catholic prelates men of such manners and understanding; *beau jour*, all very civil to me, and complimentary about Vindex, and refuse to drink lord Hillsborough," &c. Several of his entries in this interval plainly indicate the perfect notoriety of the entire proceedings of Mr Tone and his party. A strong sense of indignation and alarm was, as a matter of course, excited in the bulk of the loyal population of the north, and Mr Tone, with his democratic associates, meet with insults, and are menaced with dangers, which, with his ordinary candour, he endeavours to stigmatize with inappropriate names. "Horrible thing, these *religious* discords, which are certainly fomented by the aristocrats of this country." Thus, this most flagitious faction, of which it was the immediate object to taint the Roman catholic peasantry with disaffection, pretended to misunderstand the certain and proper consequence of their own acts. A few days after, a public meeting was held, to receive from Mr Tone an account of the "present state of the catholics," and he enters among other things in his diary:—"The catholics offer to find soldiers, if Belfast will provide officers." Now, the question is not here about the loyalty of the Roman catholics: it is simply made evident, that every instrumentality was set in motion by the United Irishmen to corrupt them—of course, not without considerable success—there is no reproach so far; at all events, the evidence of this agency, of its success, and of its notoriety, is beyond all further question. These inferences are most important; for, besides the main conclusion to which this memoir leads, there is a very strong appeal to the fairness and candour of those who cast reproach on the violence, real and pretended, of the strong protestant spirit which was raised in opposition to such proceedings. It must now be admitted, that such proceedings were not merely calculated to awaken disgust and abhorrence; but, considering the times—the state of Europe—and the universal fears of that day—it is to be admitted, that it was an occasion for every spark of self-preserving spirit to be awake, and that there was ample excuse for stronger feelings. If there mixed with this any tinge of delusion—if the real notorious indications, to which Mr Tone is a fair and unimpeachable testimony, were a little overrated as to extent and consequence—we know not any ground on which any portion of the public can be expected to measure, compute, and foresee, the precise amount, force, and result, of an approaching storm. Without casting reproach on either of the two great popular parties then committed in strife and mortal enmity together, we think it the evident result of the real facts of history, that the leaders of the United Irishmen were (then at least,) the entire originators of the local disturbances of which we are now speaking, as well as of those larger consequences, more directly to be illustrated by our memoir.

Mr Tone relates a conference with the marquis of Downshire and lord Hillsborough, in which he seems to applaud himself on the part he sustained. Looking to the previous revelations, in which he seems to forget how far he has taken the reader into his confidence, it is as good as any farce to read his unconstrained falsehoods and misrepresentations, which produce not the slightest effect upon lord Hillsborough. Nothing, indeed, can quite account for a species of reeling



inconsistency that pervades this diary, but the one little memorandum that sometimes closes the entry, "generally drunk."

It is, at the same time, made evident enough, that a few respectable persons, chiefly men of very popular opinions, were really imposed on by the reckless disregard of truth, which enabled Mr Tone to shape his statement to his hearer. With respect to the connexion between Mr Grattan and the leaders of this party, it is liable for this very reason to be mistaken, and, on account of the space it would require, is difficult to explain further. It is for this reason that we have not, and shall not, enter into it. Mr Grattan may be safely thrown upon his character:—he was an honest and honourable man, and, moreover, a brave man, and need not be supposed to have suppressed his opinions.

We pass many incidents now of small interest in the remoteness of time, and much disclosure, bearing all the same construction as the matter already placed before the reader. There is the same mixture of secret drift totally exposed on every side—the same revelation of, and self-applause for low duplicity—the same mouthing of the heroics of patriotism and public virtue—and the same outrageous abuse of all persons official or otherwise, who appeared to show any sign of not being wholly imposed upon. At one page we find Mr Tone chuckling in the triumph of what he conceives to be successful cunning; in a few more he is assailing bitterly the report of a committee of the House of Lords, which found reasons to attach suspicion to some of his republican accomplices. It was in consequence of the committees here adverted to that the volunteers were finally disarmed, on the ground "of a charge little short of high treason." On this occasion, Mr Tone takes refuge in his usual favourite vision of Jacobinical triumph. When a rough but timely exertion of the self-preserving duty of government had begun to arrest in its course the rapid progress of an ill-concealed attempt at treasonable organization; his sanguine temper never gave way to despair; he swallows the momentary ebullition, and exclaims, or writes, "Perhaps a time may come ———." The double-tongued narrative of Mr Tone will impose on no one; but the confusion of parties and objects, then associated, gave at the time a speciousness to the language of such men. It did more; for there were many, whose zeal in the more overt and honourable of those objects, did not allow them to perceive the natural consequence of such an association; for, under the circumstances, serious as they were, and urgent as they appeared to be, of course it was impossible with great accuracy to discriminate in the medley, who was the true man, and who the false. But, what is yet of some importance, the numerous narratives since written of the events of that period have taken their tone of statement from the loose and most lying invectives of that double-bodied and double-tongued association, so that one wonders to find such gratuitous acts of tyranny, and such tyrants as they paint, until something of the real truth peeps out from the "generally drunk" revelations of Mr Tone, whose evenings of pleasant jollification have so far counteracted the boasted discretion of his mornings. His communicativeness under these inspirations must often put his readers in mind of Trinculo's, "Open your other mouth you cat monster." Though, after all, it would be unfair not to state the fact,

that Mr Tone's communications were not altogether so indiscreet, as may be presumed by any one who has only seen those extracts which we have made: his diaries were not meant for the public, which is indebted for them to the very curious inadvertency of his son.

Among the peculiarities observable in the conduct of the association thus constituted, there is one not quite so glaringly observable as those hitherto stated—we mean the evidence which appears of underhand attempts to induce the Roman catholic body to put forward their claims in the manner most likely to hazard their rejection. We have no object here in tracing this with any detail; but, it is evident enough, that they were for this end induced to assume a far more exacting and peremptory tone, at the very time when suspicions, which were not unlikely to injure them, were filling the minds of men, and even influencing the acts of government. The appeal to force was so hinted, for this purpose; and the amount of their demands, also augmented, for this was connected with the declaration of further expectations. This, as we shall have occasion to show, was quite at variance with the real feeling of the Roman catholic body: and our conclusion is, that it was a suggestion for the purpose of drawing them into the confederacy. Their indifference on the subject of relief, is authoritatively affirmed by M'Nevin, Emmet, &c., when examined in 1798.

But one of the plainest signs of this manœuvre is the disappointment shown immediately after, when, to the surprise of both sections of this party, the government suddenly yielded a larger measure of relief than had been hoped for by the most sanguine emancipator. This has been already related—it was in April, 1793. “By one comprehensive clause, all penalties, forfeitures, disabilities, and incapacities, are removed,” &c., &c. In the language of Mr Tone, continued for nearly a page of exemptions, immunities, and privileges, which he ends by observing, “From comparison, it will appear, that every complaint recited has been attended to; every grievance *specified* has been removed.” But Mr Tone was clearly not among those who triumphed. The next words convey the real direction of his thoughts, in quest of some little spark to keep up the fire he cherished, “Yet the prayer of the petition was for *general* relief. The bill is not coextensive with the prayer.” In various forms he insinuates expressions which prove his sense of the measure to have been one of regret; he looked upon it as diminishing the stock of discontent; and, while a certain formal consistency forces him to speak of it in terms of approval, as conformable to his principles, yet the bile of dissatisfaction oozes unconsciously through all his reflections; every allusion to the subject has some reference to the one fundamental object; and it is in consequence of this that his language teems with admission. In his eyes the *one* consequence is “a loss of public spirit.” “A consequent carrying under cover of the catholic bill, the gunpowder and militia acts, augmentation of the army, proclamations,” &c.; that is to say, that, having granted liberal concessions to the full extent of public expectation, the government took the only means to suppress a dangerous conspiracy, to which Mr Tone himself was privy, and which was then giving the utmost alarm to all peaceable persons. In a word, every paragraph of the diary, which his son ventures to publish, plainly displays some

part of a train of thought perpetually running on the means and chances of the separation of the two countries.

Now, in direct defiance of the whole spirit, and almost the letter of all these communications, Mr Tone's biographer has the singular effrontery to interpose at this point a statement already adverted to, tracing to the abuses and tyrannies of this very time the whole train of revolutionary incidents and workings, which we have been so very distinctly tracing in his father's whole diary. The point is one of infinite importance in Irish history; on this assertion, the whole tissue of misrepresentation, which corrupts the very language of our politics, may be shown to turn. To impose this notion, was first the artifice of conspiracy—it next became the adopted aim of every one concerned in it; from them it has been handed down, until contradiction has been outfaced by a perseverance in the most egregious falsehood. And even Mr Tone, junior, has only caught up a commonly adopted misrepresentation from a class of party pamphleteers and orators, whose misrepresentations, not being marred by any of his father's candour, or his own indiscretion, are by no means so easy to detect.

It is just at this time, we are informed, that the "oppressive measures" of the government fired the hearts of the multitude with indignation, so that "no longer bounding their views to catholic emancipation and reform of parliament, they aimed at separation, liberty, and even revenge. Their societies took a fiercer character, and then, for *the first time*, began those *secret oaths and associations*, by which their members bound themselves; whilst the Orange Lodges, with *forms* at least as illegal as those of the United Irishmen, [*forms*, indeed!] and purposes [not as illegal, but] as *diabolical* as those of the others were pure and liberal, [!!] were encouraged by the government all over the country;"—the "independence of Ireland" being the "avowed" principles of the first; "slavery," &c., of the second. The reader, by this, understands the vocabulary of the Tones, and we need not explain what is intended by independence and slavery. Thus, then, when the United Irishmen—whose progress we have traced from the beginning, but without one-tenth of the evidence which could be brought even from the pages of Mr Tone and his son—had begun to conspire for the subversion of the civil and religious institutions of the state, with a fully understood view to the murderous and antisocial principles which had been so fully and notoriously adopted; their adversaries,—those functionaries whose duty it was to guard the institutions of the state, and those individuals and classes which lived, prospered, and found rest under them,—were not the traitors and the passive cowards, had not the dishonesty or the imbecility to shrink from their posts, or to be wanting to themselves and their families in a moment so heavily laden with menace from abroad, and disaster at home. It was easy—and ever has been, among the artifices of the partisan—to make a case out of the strong collision between open resistance and half-concealed rebellion, which used an indirect language, and pretended to deny its intent. And we may, in passing, observe, that the popular writers who think it necessary at this time to account for the sudden change of the government from liberal concession to great harshness, assign inadequate causes and motives. We do not deny (or



grant) any of their allegations of fact: in the encounter of human passions, much that is evil will inevitably float uppermost on either side: corruption and oppression are weeds which intertwine their tendrils with the pillars of the social state; for they are in human nature. We believe, that when violence begins, and law being defied by one side, is laid aside by the other as *insufficient*, that the least humane tempers are those which will press forward on one side to vindicate society; on the other, to break down its barriers. We freely join in denouncing the alleged tortures, and half-hangings and burnings—they are not the weapons with which we would defend our home, or church, or state. But if we were compelled to choose, we freely say, we should prefer them to the *guillotine* and the *lanterne*, the bloody-handed judgments of armed rebels—the worse atrocities of every sort, which have been far oftener and more extensively perpetrated against laws. At the time in question, even Mr Tone was compelled to exert himself to rein in the revolutionary enthusiasm, “roused by the energetical efforts and dazzling exploits of the French Revolution;” and, again, “as in all periods of popular fermentation, the loudest and boldest talkers took the lead, and the papers teemed with the most imprudent and inflammatory publications. These ebullitions of impotent resentment, by which they only favoured the views of administration, he [Mr Tone,] always condemned.” . . . . “Make yourselves free,” would he say, “and then call yourselves what you please.” This prudence was elicited when they addressed him, and each other, with the Jacobinical address of “citizen.” But it never seems to enter the head of Mr Tone’s biographer, that all those inflammatory publications, and this open bearing of the broadest revolutionary language, should have caused any apprehension, or called for any activity of the government.

But we must pass on. At length a Mr Jackson, sent over by the French government to “sound the people of Ireland on their willingness to join the French, was traced and arrested, on a charge of high treason. Previous to this, the government had obtained information from a person to whom Jackson had been indiscreet enough to disclose his secret—this person was employed to watch his movements, and he was suffered to pass freely into Ireland. The leaders of the *patriotic* party [surely Dr Johnson must have taken his celebrated definition of a patriot from some such sentence,] and catholics in Ireland, desirous as they were to open a communication with France, were unwilling to compromise themselves with a stranger, by answering directly to his overtures. My father undertook to run the risk, and even engaged himself to bear their answer to that country, and deliver to its government a statement of the wants and situation of Ireland.” The arrest of Jackson spread terror among the ranks of the republicans; but still more it seemed to involve the reckless enthusiast, who had so far placed himself in the broad light of exposure. His associates, and the body which they led, were advised by Mr Grattan to cast him off, and he was in daily expectation of his arrest. Mr Grattan’s ignorance of the real extent of the conspiracy is incidentally attested by the biographer in the mention of these circumstances. He states, that his advice was rejected by the other leaders, and explains it by saying,

“ Though my father put himself forward in the cause on this occasion, most of their leaders were as deeply engaged as himself, and could neither in honour, in justice, nor in *prudence*, act otherwise—a circumstance of which Grattan was probably not aware.” This, in some measure, as we have already noticed, explains the strong denunciations of Mr Grattan’s rhetoric.

Mr Tone was now advised to conceal himself, but this his pride and reckless audacity refused. It was, however, out of the question that he should longer be allowed freely to brave the laws; and the government, unwilling to act with harshness towards a man of much reputed kindness and amiability, who was generally esteemed for his social talents, acted towards him with a degree of lenity which would, indeed, be unaccountable, were it not for two considerations:—it was yet but the beginning of the struggle, and the animosity of party had not been engaged; and Mr Tone had many friends whose influence with government was now used in his behalf. Among these, his son gratefully mentions the honourable Marcus Beresford, the honourable George Knox, and lord Kilwarden. An agreement was made between these gentlemen and the government, that he should leave Ireland so soon as he could settle his private affairs.

There is, in the whole account given by Mr Tone himself of this transaction, much to further implicate his fairness. But the exposure would be superfluous, and lead us too far. One comment must, however, be made; because a main object here is to expose the falsehood of a systematic language not confined to the Tones. After giving his father’s statement, drawn up for the government, of his interviews with Mr Jackson, the younger Tone makes the following remarks:—“ Jackson,” he observes, “ was allowed to proceed, not in order to *detect* an existing conspiracy, *but to form one*,” &c. The exposure of this absurdity only requires its juxtaposition with the foregoing statements; and, relying on this, we shall not tire the reader with much remark upon it; it offers a fair sample of the common accusations already stated. It may, indeed, be of some moment to point out the inconsistency of pen and tongue, which had acquired the habit of such conscious falsehoods, as plainly indicating the origin of much imposture.

When such persons as Mr Tone are the historians of a conflict between themselves and the resolute and the successful antagonists, who ultimately brought them and their stratagems to confusion and defeat, one might look for misrepresentation as a matter of course. It might have been expected that it would have been more dexterously effected. But such is the avidity of the popular ear, and such the indifference to truth of popular appeal, that the manifest self-contradiction, and the entire disagreement between the assertion last repeated, and the state of facts, (here described on the same authority,) has never deterred writers from repeating this charge. It is, indeed, worth considering, that it is an accusation, which, if admitted, (*together with Mr Tone’s whole statements*,) would have no intrinsic weight. Into this question we shall not enter. There is not a particle of evidence for it. But the origin of such a charge ought to be sifted out from the vague chaff of factious accusation which conceals it. Mr Tone, in more places than one, (as well as his son,) infers the intention of

the government to irritate the people from the stringency and force of the precautions which they took against an apprehended insurrection; the arms bill, &c., &c. Now, in the first place, there is nothing in any of these provisions to irritate any person, but those with whose actual views they interfered; that there were such persons is avowed by Mr Tone: it is also shown, that they were generally objects of fear through the kingdom. If, then, the conspirators, and those who were infected by the same contagion were irritated, the rest of the community were likely to be very differently affected. So much for the fact. But, secondly, granting that such irritation was excited to any serious extent, still it must have only shown how much required was the promptness of the government. The circumstances, as related, were such as to place the government in a dilemma not quite unusual; if they stood passive for a time, it would be said that it was to let conspiracy ripen; if they acted, it was to irritate the people. Now, by the statement of the foregoing pages, the real state of the case at the moment to which we are arrived was this:—A Jacobinical contagion had for years been propagating with extraordinary talent and address. In Ireland it was specially favoured by many advantages, of which the chief was the existence of another wide-spread cause for popular excitement—we mean the catholic question. The two things were separate, and for a time worked on in channels totally distinct. But there was in the Jacobinical faction a deficiency of materials; it had been originated in the froth and scum of a civilized, wealthy, and well-affected class. As it grew, the opposition to it sprung up with itself. But the art of its leaders was shown by the adroitness with which they effected a forced union with a class, the largest and most inflammable in the kingdom. It was then that a danger, which otherwise might have been left to die away, became full of real emergency. The government acted with a promptness and sagacity, which, looking only to the immediate exigency, cannot be too much praised. They passed a measure which exceeded the very desires of the Roman catholic body; and, “under cover,” (the accuser’s language,) passed such acts as the occasion required: acts which could have no operation, unless to put down an armed conspiracy. This, then, is the complaint. Men, whose entire object it was by every means to bring about a revolution, thought it fit that the government should be quietly duped; that it should stand on forms and terms of courtesy with them, and play out a child’s play of clumsy finesse with a banditti who called themselves patriots, and maintained lofty pretences by the abnegation of every truth. It is, indeed, an assumption which pervades the entire of Tone’s memoirs and reasonings, and has been largely adopted ever since; the suppressed premise of many an argument, that every allowance is to be made for the public disturber, and those who follow in his train: that the political adventurer is to be trusted if he calls himself a patriot; and that conspirators are not to be affronted when they are most foully misnamed the people: that the ministers should tie one hand, and go on their knees to box the lightfingered urchin who cries “fair play” in the streets. That the demand should be made is but natural, but it seems strange what credence it meets.

Mr Tone preserved his wonted character to the last on the occasion



of this compromise, taking a high, honourable, and upright tone; while everything he said and did, when reduced to its simple sense, was full of equivocation and bitterness. His account of what he said and did, is like the chorus of some vile street ballad, which we remember to have heard insulting decorum in the public streets, in which at the close of every verse, full of offensive meaning in very proper language, the singer turning to the ring of ragged hearers with the burthen, "sure I have said nothing you can take amiss." Such, indeed, is the singularly quibbling and equivocating spirit of every part of the diary, and the biographical commentary with which it is mixed: the strong and plain statement of treasonable proceedings is accompanied by violent invectives against all who could imagine such designs had any existence; and it is curiously apparent how such a course, long kept up, had to some extent become an unconscious intuition of Mr Tone's understanding. In his representations to his government protectors, he assumes a tone of heroic self-immolation, yet contrives to insinuate some misrepresentation in almost every sentence. An entry on 20th November, 1792, may be used to give a clear notion of Mr Tone's actual opinion of the state of facts, and his own private views of conduct—"O'Brien says the common people are in high spirits, and are anxious for *the event*. Bravo! better have the peasantry of one county, than twenty members of parliament. Gog [Keogh] seems to-day disposed for all manner of treason and mischief—separation of the countries, &c.—a republic, &c.—is of opinion that it will not end without blows, and says he for one is ready. Is he? Mr Hutton [Tone] quite prepared, *having nothing to lose*."

Before finally passing from this by far the most important stage of Mr Tone's recollections, it is necessary to advert to the further disclosures contained in the appendix to it. From several fragments of letters addressed to Mr Tone, the following particulars can, with the help of the concurrent diaries, be inferred, that there was some anxiety on the part of the committees and leaders of the United Irishmen to keep back the Roman catholic question, and to induce that body to extend their demands commensurately with their own purposes (see p. 221)—that Mr Tone had supported French principles in several public meetings through Ireland—that even the *popular* journals thought it necessary to oppose the extreme principles asserted on those occasions—that some difficulties were threatened, from the circumstance of the conduct of the Parisians being in many things such as "cannot be very acceptable to the Irish catholic," (same letter.) The following resolution demands no comment; it proceeded from a few persons, but will be regarded as coming from the party, and more distinctly stating its views: "We are humbly of opinion, that an application for *anything specific* from the catholic body would tend to retard that catholic reform which we so much desire, because we fear that government, *alarmed as they are at present*, will, by a gradual and pitiful extension of privilege to that much oppressed body, *operate a division amongst Irishmen*, in order to retard the general freedom of Ireland." And again, "In the present glorious era, we do expect that our catholic countrymen have too high value for the *rights of man*, to be satisfied with anything short of them." We may here, by the way, observe, that there is

every reason to believe that this manœuvre was understood to the fullest extent, and actively as well as prudently resisted by the higher class of persons who were the real representatives of the Romanists. It was agreed upon between government and the friends of Mr Tone, that he should be permitted to settle his affairs and go to America. The trial of Mr Jackson, on a charge of high treason, involved him so completely that, to have suffered him to remain unmolested in Ireland, would, indeed, have amounted to a concession of the right of treasonable proceedings; as, among other lesser grounds for suspicion, the government obtained possession of a paper which he had drawn up for the information of the French Directory; and this paper, which is published with his other writings, is as plain as can be in the nature of its communications. There is, therefore, no reason to accuse the government of harshness; but, on the other hand, it is difficult to comprehend the weakness of letting him go, as it must have operated to remove the fears which were communicated by the execution of Jackson.

After reaching America, Mr Tone, with that lubricity of principle which marks his conduct and language on every occasion, immediately lays down as a clear position, that he is entirely exonerated from any obligation to the government which had thus made him a present of life and freedom. His sense of honour and gratitude had been over-rated strangely; he was let go without exacting any pledge that he would not use his escape for the purpose of treason. It was enough for him, as he stated it to all persons he met, that he had only promised to go to America; when this was done, he was clearly at liberty for the work of vengeance. This too is a point on which we do not think it justifiable to allow disguise; his letters speak of patriotism and the rights of man, and all the pernicious absurdities of the fanatic school of which he was a disciple; but in his diaries the fulness of his heart is always breaking out in the language of the bitterest animosity, and in numerous occasional glimpses of the base ambition of a buccanier.

A letter to Mr Arthur O'Connor presents rather a curious specimen of the odd combination of equivocation and self-illusion which we have more than once noticed. It is made more curious by the purpose for which it has been published by his son; "as it contains a clear and beautiful vindication of my father's conduct, I insert it here." There cannot be anything of deeper interest than a son vindicating his parent from posthumous infamy. Such a pious office the most rigid censor would be unwilling to interrupt; but we must say, that such clemency would, in the present instance, be to give up all principle and every distinction between right and wrong. The defence of Mr Tone simply consists in the assertion that he could *justify the traitorous design* of which he was suspected. "The charge made against me, when stripped of the necessary legal and constitutional epithets, is, that I wished to introduce a French force into Ireland, to subvert the present government, and to establish a republic in its place. To this charge I shall give *as to the fact*, no answer. But as to the principle, supposing it to be the case of an indifferent person, something at least may be said," &c., &c. He then proceeds to justify the supposed principle by the very rubbish of the most vulgar

fallacies and false analogies, resorted to by the shallowest demagogues to the lowest factions; and the "clear and beautiful vindication" is precisely on a level with the defence of a highwayman appealing to the equal rights of property and the natural community of goods.

In the mean time, the strenuous and alert conduct of Mr Tone and his most efficient coadjutors in the cause of revolution, had not gone for nothing. Every grievance, real or imaginary, swelled the impulse; every discontentment, every evil and every idle and reckless person was gradually won over. Men like Arthur O'Connor, Neilson, Keogh, and the Emmetts, could not fail of success in their endeavours to propagate discontent, faction, and military ardour. A political and social millennium was to dawn from France—and the people were to be raised to affluence and freedom. With this, some effect of the same tendency was necessarily produced, by the reaction of opposite principles, in the well-ordered and respectable portion of the community, in which fear and the violent menaces of the disaffected generated a strong and resolute spirit of defiance. It was not in the nature of things, that the language of republicanism, and the still fiercer and deeper breathings of revolutionary madness, which freely issued through the press, and infected the conversation of a large and spreading party, should not awaken fear, indignation, and stern opposition. And the enmity of faction quickly began to add fierceness to the slow but fatal conflagration. Indeed, it is too little considered, that it is not from those public speeches and manifestoes, in which there is always a discreet reserve, that the actual tone of party feeling is communicated or measured in such times: it is from the unreserved private indications which are continually escaping on less formal occasions, and from the language and conduct of individuals. We should have to write a large volume to bring together and relate the multitudinous petty but significant incidents which would establish the fact, that at this time the whole country was deeply agitated with the contending emotions, designs, fears, and resentments, here adverted to. It must then be understood, that a strong reacting spirit was generated, concurrently with the insurrectionary tendency which we are engaged in tracing; and that the one gave added heat and rancour to the other. As matter of course, it will be understood, that the measures of government were not allowed by the leaders of the United Irishmen to pass without enough of comment, such as we have instanced from Mr Tone; and, as always must happen in such cases, the very mildness, of these measures being such as to prevent fear, the irritation was the greater.—From these elements gradually arose a medley of animosities, terrors, and, finally, outrages. But it is at this point that we shall have to take up our thread in other memoirs. We must now briefly follow Mr Tone through the remainder of his history. We should not have dwelt so long upon the previous statements, were it not for the singular combination of the writers, into whose representations of the events of the period we have had to look—to give false views of every topic connected with their history. We might easily have stated the whole of the substance of our own view in a few sentences; but, as there exists a prepossession in the public mind on the subject, it has occurred to us, that the main duty of the biographer and his



torian is to rectify such errors. And when such charges are made, they should be accompanied by some proof. If nothing were to be done but merely to ascertain the merits of Mr Tone, we can easily admit, that the question might best be left to oblivion, which would be more than justice for such persons and their deeds. But the history of Mr Tone's time has been written by the hand of faction; the injustice of its representations has not been confined to the exaltation of knaves and fools, but in the proportionate depression of wise and honourable men. The evidence of Mr Tone may be safely taken against himself and his accomplices in treason and folly. Specious as party statements commonly are, a book like his is a rare and precious gift to the public; as without any redeeming virtue of candour, it betrays the real views and motives of the United Irishmen—the sources from which they originated—the means by which they worked—and the full extent of the effects which they produced. The historians who seem to have compiled their histories from the newspapers, and from the speeches of popular leaders, have found it easy to trace the rebellion to causes which never yet produced rebellion—the means taken to repress the dangerous indications so fully accounted for by Mr Tone. If the government had not taken the steps it did, the same charge would have been brought against its inertness. Such charges, indeed, have been so made.

On Mr Tone's American adventures it is not necessary to dwell. Mr Hamilton Rowan, who had escaped from prison, had reached America before him. To this gentleman he applied to introduce him to citizen Adet, the French ambassador at Philadelphia. He was well received, and at once communicated his plans respecting the possibility of an Irish invasion. During this negotiation he kept up a correspondence with his Irish accomplices, Keogh, Russel, Tandy, &c., who liberally supplied him with money. He had also a little council of those members of the conspiracy, who like himself had been forced to fly from the terror of their country's justice, and were now collected about him in the United States. Under auspices so favourable, his projects went smoothly on; and, after six months from his landing, he again sailed for France, with such credentials from Adet as were necessary to place him in communication with the authorities. Here, once more, his diary proceeds with the same serio-comic strain of disclosure, observation, and lively humour, always amusing, and often valuable for its graphic sketches of men and things. But we are with some reluctance forced to pass these, and all details not immediately relevant to the expressed intent of this memoir; a purpose but for which we should have dismissed Mr Tone lightly indeed.

In France, the whole spirit of revolutionary fanaticism, which Mr Tone was so long compelled to suppress, escapes in full flow from his heart and eyes. "Here was no fiction! and that it was that drew the tears irresistibly to my eyes!" was the record and reflection of the patriotic enthusiast at some of the displays of republican pomp and power, which generally called forth the same amiable weakness. "The tears were running down my cheeks when Carnot presented the wreaths and standards to the soldiers. It was a spectacle worthy

of a grand republic, and I enjoyed it with transport—"vive la republique." And again speaking of the troops, "I frequently find the tears gush into my eyes when I am looking at them."—Talking of the *grande nation*, he says, "the French are a humane people; and I like them with all their faults, and the guillotine at the head of them, a thousand times better than the English,"—these fine touches of *sans culotte* sentimentality may help to show how congenial was the scene into which Mr Tone was now transplanted. A strange medley of levity and atrocity, of *bonhomie* and savage passions, flows so naturally through his pages, as with great force to illustrate the character which we have already assigned to the earlier self-portraits of his life.

He presently finds his way to the levees of ministers and generals, who recognised in him a fitting tool for the noble ambition of Young France. His self-importance and exultation here burst from him, in some strains of high rhodomontade. "Nothing but ministers and directoire executif, and revolutionary memorials. Well, my friend Plunkett, (but I sincerely forgive him,) and my friend Magee, whom I have not yet forgiven, would not speak to me in Ireland, because I was a republican. Sink or swim, I stand on as high ground to-day as either of them. My venerable friend, old Captain Russel, had hopes of me in the worst of times. Huzza! I believe that wiser men, if they would speak the truth, would feel a little elevated in my situation, &c., &c." This glimpse of the naked heart reminds us of the proverb—"as the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise." Among other most interesting traits of this species of elevation, the reader will be amused by this:—"The devil puts it into my head sometimes that I am like Hannibal at the court of Prusias, supplicating his aid to enable Carthage to make war upon the Romans. There is a sort of analogy in the circumstances."—This is hard enough on poor Hannibal, it must be confessed; but surely unmerited: Mr Tone with his usual inadvertency had overlooked the main features of either side of his "*sort of analogy*."

The main peculiarity of the negotiation in which he now became actively engaged, is the keen and sly regard with which he keeps sight of his own interests,—and the active and earnest perseverance with which he pushes his suit. These might be illustrated at great length from the source from which we have made so many extracts. He obtained a commission of *Chef de Brigade*, and an advance of pay; and after many delays; much dancing attendance on the republican functionaries; and a well-described interview with Buonaparte himself, he has at last the satisfaction of seeing the wishes of his patriotic breast realized.

The expedition to Bantry Bay followed; but by the merciful interposition of Providence, it was frustrated by a hurricane within sight of its destination. At this point of his narrative, the journal of Mr Tone becomes exceedingly interesting: the particulars of the expedition, and the incidents of a tedious cruise in and about Bantry Bay are detailed with minute accuracy. The fleet is scattered by stress of weather; gales of wind and heavy fogs succeed each other, as if commissioned to protect the coast; and the Frenchmen, discouraged by these incidents, exhibit a tone of doubt as to the prudence of persever-



ing, which irritates the zealous temper of Mr Tone. Nevertheless he was forced to see and confess that the diminution of their force had become such as to destroy any prospect of success. Under these circumstances, his conduct was such as very strongly to illustrate that view of his character and of his genuine sentiments, which we are desirous to communicate. Without the only hope which could even on his own principles (if so they can be called,) justify an attempt, he shows the real impulses of his nature by proposing to do *something for the honour of the republic*. Having several times, and in various forms, expressed his sense that the horrors which he intended to inflict on the community could only be justified by the great end; his eagerness to satisfy the piratical and the vindictive tendencies of his nature, led him to urge the perpetration of those enormities without any end. We are compelled to be sparing in our extracts; but we affirm nothing of which the journal of Mr Tone will not furnish a superabundant evidence. He states, (vol. ii. p. 259,) that since we must look on the main object as now unattainable, "it was now their duty," he urged, "to see what could best be done for the honour and interest of the republic with the force which remained in our hands; and I proposed to him to give me the Legion des Francs, a company of the Artillerie legere, and as many officers as desired to come volunteers in the expedition, with what arms and stores remained, which are now reduced by our separation, to four field-pieces, 20,000 fire-locks at most, 1,000 pounds of powder, and 3,000,000 of cartridges, and to land us in Sligo Bay, and let us make the best of our way, &c." In the event of failure, on which we must recollect that he calculated, he urges to the commander, that "he knew what *kind of desperadoes it was composed of, and for what purpose*; consequently, in the worst event, the republic would be well rid of them; finally, I added, that though I asked the command, it was on the supposition that none of the generals would risque their reputation on such a desperate enterprise, &c." It is here apparent enough, that Mr Tone had dressed for himself a very tolerable realization of the buccaniering visions of his early days. Not very sanguine of success, and quite prepared for those terrible consequences which he frequently pretends to deprecate with the "tyrant's plea" of necessity, it becomes evident, on the most lenient construction, that he could not resist the temptation of placing himself at the head of a band of desperadoes, and the burning, murdering, and plundering warfare which such an adventure implied. Such was the innate ambition of his breast. Connected with it, there can be no doubt that the frequently expressed ardour for revenge must at the moment have breathed fiercely from his heart—the wounded self-conceit, and the sore spirit of disappointment. One very amusing piece of naiveté occurs during this anxious moment,—he expresses his surprise at "the extreme *sang froid* with which I view the coast, &c." "I do not, however, love my country the less, for not having romantic feelings with regard to her."—Mr Tone was near stumbling on a discovery long communicated to his readers; the same feelings he showed at different times towards his father, and even his wife, he entertained towards his country, and these were certainly not of the romantic order. These were all alike the occasional objects on which a lively and self-concentrated *sensibility*



was reflected, and each of which he was ever ready to sacrifice for the least of his passions,—pride, self-conceit, and the restless thirst for adventure. One, indeed, of the surest indications of spurious sentiment, is its inconsistency; it fails on the practical test of *particular* applications, and delights to rest in highflown generalities. Mr Tone's love of country did not embrace his countrymen, of whom, as may be found in his ample self-revelations, every rank and class, falls by turn under his hate and scorn; and it is indeed amply evident that a theory not very definite, and a resolution to work it out, constitutes his whole stock of patriotism. But in the perusal of Mr Tone's journals, there are chapters of the morbid pathology of our nature far more interesting than his politics, and offering many temptations to digress from the history to the man. Few indeed have poured themselves so freely on paper.

But amidst the gloom of disappointment, there appeared a transient gleam of renewed hope to Mr Tone and his companions. On the day after the entry last adverted to, the ardour of Mr Tone seems to have spread, and nothing but a speedy landing was thought of. Mr Tone grows delirious with triumph and delight, and has in the mean time worked himself into a dream of success. "Huzza! I apprehend we are this night 6000 of the most careless fellows in Europe; for everybody is in the most extravagant spirits on the eve of an enterprise, which, considering our means, *would make many people serious*"—a patriot, a man capable of reflection, of humanity and feeling, surely; but not one who had thoroughly identified himself with the "desperadoes" by whom Mr Tone was accompanied. His ardour was now and then crossed by painful reflections; he speculates on the result of a battle; and the chilling phantom of the gallows rises portentously among his meditations, and evidently lays strong hold of his imagination; but he nobly dismisses such gloomy shadows by the heroic reflection with which we apprehend he could have consoled himself under any conceivable circumstances—"Nothing on earth could sustain me now, but the consciousness that I am engaged in a just and righteous cause." The thoughts of his family now, as in former times, can be more easily dismissed, than those inauspicious imaginings; he adds—"for my family, I have, *by a desperate effort*, surmounted my natural feelings so far, that I do not think of them at this moment." If the reader will give himself the trouble to look back to the history of the first years of Mr Tone's married life, he will rightly appreciate the amount of this "desperate effort."

In our selections from the journal on this occasion, we have only aimed to bring forward the narrator himself. The details of an expedition which led to no result, though very instructive and entertaining, are needless here. Suffice it to say, that symptoms of the abandonment of the enterprise quickly appeared. After having been "six days in Bantry Bay, within five hundred yards of the shore," and having their ships scattered, and diminished from 43 sail to 14, it was settled to sail back to Brest, provided they could escape the English. Mr Tone consoles himself with many characteristic reflections: defrauded by the cruel elements of all hope to "be great, nor famous, nor powerful," he whispers to himself that he may be happy, and con-

jures up a dream of domestic felicity. It is nearly ludicrous under these circumstances, how rapidly his moveable nature becomes invested with the cast clothes of parental and conjugal tenderness, and he straightway falls into new horrors about his separation from his wife and "darling babies."

On the last day of the year 1796, he was once more on the way to Brest; where, after a highly tempestuous passage, during which he experienced some very alarming and disagreeable casualties, he arrived on the first of January, 1797. Shortly after his arrival, Mr Tone was transferred, with the rank of adjutant-general, to the army of the Sambre and Meuse, under his friend general Clarke. This interval may be passed—it was not of long duration. In the month of March, we find him journalizing in Paris, leading the "life of a dog." Not being quite a Frenchman, he felt deserted and alone, a state from which his strongly social temper revolted. He becomes acquainted with Tom Paine, and is of course captivated by his profound wisdom, and lofty morality; but has the sagacity to perceive that he is not absolutely perfect. "I have been lately introduced to the famous Thomas Paine, and like him very well. He is vain beyond belief; but he has reason to be vain, and for my part I forgive him. He has done wonders for the cause of liberty, both in America and Europe, and I believe him to be conscientiously an honest man." And again, "he drinks like a fish,—a misfortune I have known to befall other celebrated patriots. I am told that the true time to see him to advantage is about ten at night, with a bottle of brandy and water before him, which I can very well conceive. I have not yet had that advantage; but must contrive if I can, to sup with him at least one night, before I set off for the army."

At this time, it is very observable, that the high animal spirits which have hitherto sustained Mr Tone begin to fail very much. The cause is, we believe, one very apparent through his journals, but to which we have not adverted,—a habit of drunkenness early contracted and sedulously kept up. The gloom attendant upon his circumstances of precarious adventure and friendless loneliness becomes frequent, and in the same proportion, he discovers "that it is not good for man to be alone;" and his yearnings after his wife and family grow upon him with a force that seems in some degree to soften and steady the picaroon in his heart.

His wife and family, whom he had left in America, had now reached Hamburgh on their way to join him; from which place, after some time, they reached Paris in safety. At this time, several of the United Irishmen had found their way to this capital, and Mr Tone underwent much vexation from the low intrigues by which they endeavoured to work their way to importance. They exerted themselves to discredit each other with so much dexterity, that they succeeded in obtaining the contempt of men, whose principles were little better than their own. Mr Tone, however, maintained his ground. Though lax in his notions of right and wrong, he yet was governed and sustained by that pride which was a strong trait of his character: he strove hard to keep in favour with himself, and possessed a species of honour accommodated to the general tenor of his conduct. He had by this

succeeded in convincing himself of the virtue and justice of his entire course of action, and framed his own theory, according to which, acts that the received notions of mankind consign to infamy, were either justified or rendered honourable. Without justly considering this disposition (to which the tendencies are common enough, and generally understood,) it is not easy to conceive Mr Tone's character, or to understand the occasional attitude of virtue and dignity which he seems to assume. Indeed, so important is this to many parts of this memoir, that we shall here extract a few of those reflections which now and again distil from Mr Tone's pen—which stood to him in the stead of a father confessor at times, in the total privation of social confidence to which he was often, for long intervals, condemned. The reader of his journals will often enough catch him in the task of proving to himself that he is not a knave. The following is a specimen:—"It is with me a great proof of a man's integrity, when in times of revolution he is alternately sacrificed by both parties." Mr Tone's case, it ought to be noticed in passing, is precisely the most obvious exception to the truth of this rule. Having been by one party spurned for his conduct and opinions, and outlawed from honest men, he was now beginning to be circumvented by the knavery of his associates. But let us hear himself:—"In order to do *any good*, with any party, a man must make great sacrifices, not only of his judgment, but what is much worse, I *fear of his conscience also*." . . . "He must keep a sort of *running account* with his conscience, when he is to set off the good against the bad, and if the balance be in his favour this is all he can expect." Having made this highly descriptive statement of his moral code, he adds with great naiveté, "Thus far at least I have preserved my principles," &c.

It was during this interval, in 1798, that accounts reached him of the arrest of several of his old friends and associates. His comments throw some light on the events to which they refer, and shall be used for the purpose, when we shall again have come back to Irish ground. He rails with violence against the Irish government for proceedings, of which, in the same breath, he fully and unequivocally proves the justice and confesses the necessity.

We must here pass directly to the last events of Mr Tone's life. The death of general Hoche was considered to have terminated the hopes of any expedition against Ireland on a grand scale; as this eminent officer, together with a strong zeal, possessed the influence necessary to carry his views into effect. Still there was a sense that the state of Ireland offered prospects of successful conquest not to be thrown away, though the naval force of England presented an obstacle so great as to discourage any immediate sacrifice of means. Napoleon, strongly intent on more apparently feasible objects, looked on Ireland chiefly as an object to divert the attention, and divide the force of England, the only power which held his projects in check. The Irish expedition was, therefore, handed over to inferior men; and the low state of the republican finances rendered doubtful the prospect of any further effort. Some impulse was, however, now given by the reports of the insurrectionary movements which at last began to appear in Ireland, and it was determined that something should be attempted.



On this occasion the opinions offered, and the plans proposed by the persons to whom the concerting of the invasion seems to have been left, as stated by Mr Tone, display the most farcical ignorance of everything connected with the subject. Mr Tone was, as usual, alert, urgent, and sagacious, and seems to have exerted himself successfully to set them right, and to prompt their motions. At last a plan was arranged, which we are told might have been successful, had it not been too late. This plan was to send small detachments to different parts, so as to spread and keep alive the rebellion, until the main force could be sent.

In consequence of this scheme, a small expedition first sailed from Rochelle, under general Humbert, with one thousand men. He was accompanied by a few Irishmen, among whom were Matthew Tone and Bartholomew Teeling. Towards the end of August they landed in Killala Bay, and immediately stormed the town. Satisfied with this first fruit of French valour in Ireland, Humbert loitered here, drilling Irish peasants, and enjoying the hospitality of the bishop. The report of general Lake's approach, however, roused him, and he advanced to meet his enemy. Lake had been hastily detached to check the advance of the French—they met near Castlebar, and Lake's detachment was defeated. We shall give the particulars further on, as we are here only concerned with the fate of Mr Tone. Humbert's expedition, which had been precipitated by his own impatience, and without awaiting the consent of the Directory, while it perplexed his government, at the same time hurried their movements; and the news of his success which reached them, unaccompanied by any account of the following defeat, gave added impulse to further preparations. A few days decided Humbert's fate, he having been surrounded and compelled to lay down his arms by lord Cornwallis at Ballinamuck. Matthew Tone, with Teeling, were taken and executed. The mass of the United Irishmen, then in Paris, followed in a small vessel, with Napper Tandy at their head. They landed on the north-west coast of Ireland, and finding the real state of affairs, they made their escape, after sending out a few proclamations.

The third party was commanded by general Hardy, with three thousand men: in this flotilla, there were but four Irishmen, of whom one was Mr Tone. Mr Tone was in the *Hoche*, in which the admiral had set up his flag.

Mr Tone had, it is asserted by his son, no hope of success; he clearly saw that the time was past, the means inadequate, and the expedition by which this was to be followed up, unlikely to be executed. But from his own memoirs we also learn, that though Mr Tone possessed very considerable acuteness and sagacity, he was strongly under the control of the adventure-loving temperament which was the demon that ruled him; he cherished a strong presentiment of success, which he expresses or betrays in many ways. He had nevertheless sufficient apprehensions of the possibility of a fatal event, to lead him into some curious speculations as to the conduct he should pursue, if taken, and came to the resolution never to suffer the indignity of a public execution. Suicide he considered, in such a danger, to be no more than choosing the mode of his death.

It was on the 20th September, 1798, when, as the younger Tone justly observes, the only circumstances that could afford any prospect of success had completely terminated, that this expedition sailed from the bay of Camaret. It consisted of one 74, and eight frigates. "To avoid the British fleets, Bompert took a large sweep to the westward, and then to the northeast, in order to bear down on the northern coast of Ireland, from a quarter where a French force would be least expected." His fleet was scattered by contrary winds, and the *Hoche* was accompanied by three frigates only, when, after a course of twenty days, they reached Lough Swilly. On the 11th of October, at day-break, he saw a fleet of six sail of the line and two frigates bearing down upon him. As nothing could be expected from resistance, and as the 74 could not hope even to escape, from the tide having ebbed and low water, Bompert signalled his frigates to escape, and the schooner having sent a boat for orders, the French officers urged that Mr Tone should save himself. He refused—and as the case was one which admitted of no result but his death or capture, it is not easy to see on what ground, consistent with the most ordinary discretion, he could have come to such a decision. A sentiment of military pride is expressed in the answer reported by his son, "Shall it be said that I fled while the French were fighting the battles of my country?"

The *Hoche* was presently attacked by two British ships, the *Robust* and the *Magnanime*, and presently after by the *Amelia*; while the frigates were some attacked and some pursued by the remaining vessels of the British squadron,—three of the French frigates, *Ambuscade*, *Coquile*, and *Bellone*, remaining with, and supporting the *Hoche*. At half-past ten, after a gallant resistance, when masts, sails, rigging, and hull, were shattered, and five feet water in her hold, the *Hoche* struck—the *Ambuscade* struck also in another hour, when the *Coquile*, with the other vessel, attempted to escape and was pursued. The *Coquile* was caught, made a brave fight, and surrendered. One British vessel, the *Anson*, had been disabled by the weather, and was compelled to remain far to leeward of the action. She was attacked by five French frigates and greatly damaged; but after sustaining an engagement for nearly three hours, she was relieved by the approach of the other vessels of the fleet. The *Melampus* was still in pursuit of the French frigate, the *Bellone*, until about two o'clock, when a very severe action followed, in which the *Bellone*, after a desperate resistance, lowered her colours. On the following day, the *Resolue*, and a few days after, the *Loire*, were taken by the *Melampus* and *Anson*, and lastly, the *Immortalité* by the *Fisgard*; so that out of the whole squadron, but two frigates and a schooner escaped. The French fought with the utmost bravery in each instance, while there was any possibility of resistance. We should have been content simply to indicate the result of this action, were it not that the account given by Mr Tone (the younger) is a vapouring misrepresentation from beginning to end.

Tone took an active part in the fight. He took charge of a battery, and exposed himself fearlessly to the British fire. He was not recognised among the other prisoners when taken, having completely



acquired the appearance, language, and manner of a Frenchman. There had been, however, a suspicion that he was in the expedition, and as a matter of course, there was immediate inquiry. It so happened that the French officers were invited to breakfast with the earl of Cavan, who was commander of the district. A gentleman who happened to be of the party recognised Mr Tone, and apprised lord Cavan of the real character of his guest. Of course, duty prescribed a single course; Mr Tone was arrested and sent to Dublin to stand his trial. Another account, on the very questionable authority of Parisian rumour, is given by Mr Tone's son, which may be fairly omitted. We cannot reasonably find fault with the writer for the bitterness of his comments, for he was a son; or for their absurdity, as they were, according to his education and ideas of fitness, quite reasonable. It was according to the principles of the Tones, the Tom Paines, the Jacobins, and the United Irishmen, quite fit and just, that an illustrious advocate of the rights of man, whose patriotism had prompted him to scatter sedition and treason at home—to plot the overthrow of the institutions, laws, and aristocracy of his country—to levy war against the government—to delude the people to slaughter—to prompt and guide the enemies of all governments to his native shores;—it was fit, according to the principles of Mr Tone, his family and friends, that he should be allowed to conceal these noble and heroic deserts under the garb of a foreign enemy. We admit, indeed, that in peaceable times, humanity would gladly wink on the escape of a man so amiable in his social character as Mr Tone. There is a very natural and not misplaced commiseration for an educated and talented gentleman; but Ireland was no place, and it was no time to leave it to be supposed, that deeds so flagrant as those of Mr Tone should be connived at by a magistrate under so flimsy a pretext, and in so unwarrantable an expedition. There seems to be in the human mind some lurking hostility to laws and institutions, which is shown by a very peculiar inconsistency of language and sentiment, that would seem most strange if it were not nearly conventional. The most depraved and most guilt-stained ruffian, who is convicted for the violation of every right and principle of humanity, seems not only to be the object of an involuntary popular commiseration, but is honoured and respected in comparison with the person who detects and drags him to justice. The sentiment can to a certain extent be justified; but if clearly analyzed, it would in the main appear to be a popular fallacy—a maxim invented for the continuance and protection of vice. But if we admit Mr Tone to have been in some degree a fair object of compassion, it must be affirmed that Sir George Hill would have been sadly wanting to his duty, as a magistrate, a gentleman, and even as a patriot, to allow him to pass.

A belief in the rectitude of his own intentions had, as we have already explained, grown up in Mr Tone's mind. His talents; the continued trials through which he had passed; his high courage; his pride; the emergency of his situation; all had communicated a sense of elevation and a dignity to his mind. As is usual with all men, he had taught himself to justify and exalt his ends and their motives, to talk and think of high-sounding actions, and to let the evil accompani-



ments and consequences lurk tacitly in the train of contingencies. He only occasionally turned inward to the latent thirst of vengeance so often expressed; the deluge of gentle and noble blood, and the woe and desolation which he was to bring into thousands of peaceful homes, he did not allow himself to dwell upon; the plunders and confiscations, the real reward of his fiery venture, he satisfied himself with a side glance of, which told him they would be matters of course; the butchery of thousands of the hapless peasantry in many a disgraceful field, he looked on as a necessary sacrifice to the phantom of liberty he worshipped; it did not occur to him to look very narrowly on the very success for which he but faintly hoped. On the whole he came now, sobered by adversity, and self-exalted by error, a brave and devoted man, the hero of a false and evil creed.

This view of his character is essential to explain the last scenes of his life. Whatever were the intrinsic merits of his life and deeds, he stood before his judges in the character of a brave and self-approving man.

He was, of course, quite aware that his life was the forfeit of his offences. It has been asserted that he entertained some hope of immunity on account of the commission he bore in the French army. This is hard to believe; and is denied by his son who very truly observes, that the speech he made on his trial does not permit this notion. But on his arrival in Dublin, a court-martial was summoned to try him. Against this he strongly protested, on what seems to us a very fair and strong plea; he bore no commission in the British army, and had a right to be tried by the civil jurisdiction of the country. It however appears, that at first he rather looked on this selection of a tribunal as advantageous, as offering the hope of a military execution.

After a few days' delay, the court-martial met on 10th November, 1798. The trial was shortened by the full and free admission of "all the facts alleged." Mr Tone offered no defence, nor did he by a word impugn the jurisdiction of the court; he only begged to be allowed to read a paper in vindication of his motives and conduct. This the court allowed, under the impression that it was the prisoner's object to offer such extenuations as might lead to a mitigation of the sentence. No such thing was in the intention of Mr Tone. He only felt that the eyes of France were upon him, and aimed to vindicate his honour by an open avowal and assertion of the principles of his life and actions. The court stopped him twice, from a humane consideration that his defence was a strong aggravation of his offence, and more likely to injure than to serve him. But Mr Tone assured them that such was not the object of his address. He was quite conscious of the real position in which he stood, and knew well that a pardon in his case, would be an abandonment of the principles of the constitution. But in fact, as he proceeded, his language became such that it was not quite consistent with the dignity of the tribunal before which he stood, to listen to it; he was checked with great forbearance and courtesy; and concluded with a few sentences. The court was sensibly affected by the courage and calm resignation of the prisoner's manner and address. After a short silence, he inquired if there was not usually an interval between the sentence and execu-

tion. The question was not answered, as the court had first to transmit the report of their proceedings to the lord-lieutenant; but asked him if he had anything more to say. On this he expressed his desire to die as a soldier. He added, "I request that indulgence, rather in consideration of the uniform which I bear—the uniform of a chef de Brigade in the French army—than from any personal regard to myself." To attest this claim, he gave in his commission. He was told by the judge-advocate that it would be a proof against him, which he admitted; but observed that he had admitted the facts, and now admitted those papers as added proofs.

Two days after, he was sentenced to be hanged in forty-eight hours.

The justice of the sentence was nowhere complained of; but the court was considered as irregular. Mr Tone was not in the military service of the crown, nor was Dublin at the time under military law. The court of King's Bench was sitting, and the whole proceeding appeared to be an infringement of its jurisdiction. We may just observe, that the case was anomalous, and such, as for some very obvious reasons required to be met by a special mode of proceeding. A rebel taken prisoner in battle is subject, in the first instance, to martial law, as could easily be proved. *Open war* is the case of last extremity, and a military court the tribunal of last resort. Mr Tone was amenable to such a court, not as charged with treason, but as taken in the ranks of an invading army. There was no trial, or ground for trial, in the common sense of the words: it was one of those flagrant military cases, in which, by a wise policy, the forms of trial are preserved, though there is nothing to be tried. The *equity* of criminal justice was not in question; the question simply was one which affected the privileges of the King's Bench; and to talk of any wrong *to the prisoner*, is merely nonsense. The proper question, therefore, would be, whether in such a case as here described, the jurisdiction of the King's Bench could properly be pleaded against the king; that is, supposing such a plea to be put in, in that court, in proper time and form. But Mr Tone not only pleaded before the military court, but pleaded guilty: there was, in fact, no suit and no party. The proceeding in the King's Bench which followed, was at the least nugatory. It did not proceed from any jealousy about the purity of justice—in strict justice Mr Tone might have been hanged when he was taken—but was simply an ebullition of a very opposite feeling, combined, we most fully believe, with an uncalculating humanity.

The policy of government was perfectly understood on all sides. It was not actuated by any sentiment towards Mr Tone. But it was not a time—while the yet sparkling embers of a bloody rebellion, of which Mr Tone and his associates were the instigators, lay scattered through town and country—to make the King's Bench the rostrum of seditious and inflammatory harangues. There were still United Irishmen unchanged and untransported, enough to raise another very sanguinary rebellion. It was fit, under the dreadful existing circumstances, that the protecting interposition of the executive should, if required, follow the crime which directly struck at its existence, even if necessary to the sanctuary of the law.

The friends of Mr Tone knew very well that he could not be acquitted. But it was thought that the sentence might be deferred until the French government could have time to interfere. With this view Mr Curran made a humane effort to interpose the authority of the court of King's Bench.

The following is the account of the proceeding in the King's Bench: "Mr Curran, assisted by Mr Burrowes, began by the endeavour to raise a subscription for the purpose of forming a bar. In this he failed. He determined to proceed alone. On the next day—the day appointed for the execution—he moved for a Habeas Corpus, to be directed to the provost-marshal of the barracks," &c. Such a motion could not be refused. The chief justice, lord Kilwarden, answered—"Have a writ instantly prepared." Mr Curran answered—"My client may die while the writ is preparing." On which lord Kilwarden said—"Mr Sheriff, proceed to the barracks, and acquaint the provost-marshal that a writ is preparing to suspend Mr Tone's execution, and see that he be not executed." The sheriff went, leaving the court in a state of excitement, and returned to state the refusal of the provost-marshal; and Mr Tone's father, who had been sent to serve the habeas corpus, came back to say that general Craig refused to obey it. Lord Kilwarden said—"Mr Sheriff, take the body of Tone into custody—take the provost marshal and Major Sandys into custody, and show the order of court to general Craig."

But there had been another actor in this tragic drama, on whose movements they had not calculated, and this was Mr Tone himself. On the night before, he had executed his predetermined purpose of suicide, by cutting his throat with a penknife. This was the account next brought into court by the sheriff. The wound had been closed by a surgeon, who pronounced that four days must elapse before the result could be pronounced upon.

It was on the morning of the 19th that decided symptoms of approaching death appeared. The surgeon whispered, that if he attempted to move or speak, he must expire instantly. Mr Tone took the inadvertent hint. He made a slight movement and spoke—"I can yet find words to thank you, Sir; it is the most welcome news you could give me. What should I wish to live for?" and expired.

This memoir has been little else than a comment. Such, indeed, was its design. To accomplish this design more fully, we must remind the reader of what it was. The history of that period has been almost uniformly written by persons of strong political opinions, and simply as a method of attack. It has also been mainly used by one, and that the popular party; and is consequently one-sided in a very peculiar degree. While the opposite party in that day, was driven to very strong and decisive resources, for the maintenance of order, their opponents had recourse to language of extreme violence, such, indeed, as may be abundantly exemplified from the pages of the Tones. This was aggravated by the casual circumstance of such men as Mr Grattan having lent their oratorical talents to the popular side. The consequence was, that the reproaches of mere party animosity, as well as the whole torrent of misrepresentations, always the missiles of popular faction, have floated down the stream of tradition, until it has



become nearly too late to contradict them; and candour seems forced to admit, that when so much is charged, and so little denied, much must be true.

We have thought it, therefore, of much importance, to lay before the reader some very plain facts on authority which could not well be denied. They have been selected to show that there was first a revolutionary spirit, propagated by educated men for many years, and quite independent of any faults of government; that this was maturing rapidly into a revolutionary movement; that actual fraternization with France was the immediate means proposed; that a plan was adopted of inveigling the Roman catholics into a participation with these objects; that this effect was partially successful among the middle classes, and eminently so among the lower.—On the other side, that the English government was at the time in justifiable alarm, and menaced by Jacobinical societies at home, and war from abroad; that Ireland has been known to be the weak side, when the enemies of England might be expected to strike; that, consequently, under the circumstances stated in the foregoing sentence, a very energetic policy was called for. The government adopted two courses—one was to *conciliate* (we are not here concerned in the wisdom of conciliation) the church of Rome—the other to take direct measures of defence. That these defensive measures disappointed the Jacobinical accomplices of Mr Tone is admitted—it is for this reason alone natural to infer that they irritated them, and all who entered into their views, or *believed* their promises.

Such was the state of things, out of which a fierce insurrection arose. It demanded the whole vigour of the executive to put it down; it was quelled by proportioned means. The event was felt as a grievance by Mr Tone's party; and, of course, the means could not escape. In the following memoirs we shall relate the main events.

## John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare.

BORN A. D. 1749.—DIED A. D. 1802.

THE father of the eminent man whose name stands at the head of this memoir, was a barrister of first-rate eminence, who is mentioned as having realized a property of £6000 a-year.

His son, John Fitzgibbon, was born in 1749. He was early destined for the bar, and received a suitable education. At an early age he entered college in the Dublin university. There he was contemporary with Grattan, and many other well-known men. His rival in the competition for academic honours, was Mr Grattan. We are informed that Mr Grattan had the advantage in the beginning; as, however, the course became more extensive, by the usual addition of more difficult books, Mr Fitzgibbon took the lead. Without the keen and electric vivacity, which distinguished his able competitor, he was endowed with a severer reason, and a more solid and sober judgment.

He was quickly called to the bar; and, while his father's weight may have operated to introduce him to the notice of the profession,

he exerted a degree of energy, industry, and commanding talent, that required no stepping-stone to success.

In 1777, he was retained as counsel against the return of Mr Richard Hely Hutchinson, as member for the university; and the election of this gentleman having been declared null, he was himself elected by the university. This was the commencement of his political life. He from the first became the strenuous supporter of the government, without solicitation or the hopes of reward. Heir to a large property, and realizing a considerable income, his professional industry was mainly prompted by the natural temper of a mind endowed with great and intense powers, looking for its appropriate sphere of exertion. To the honours of his profession he looked forward, as the distinction to be attained by very superior abilities; and by every rightly-tempered mind, it will be felt that to such a man they could have no value in any other way. That his support of government was no less independent will be easily admitted by those who candidly weigh the whole character and conduct of the man, the persons he opposed, the state of affairs on which his sagacity was exerted, the reasons he offered, or what may sum up all, the well-reasoned system of principle on which he acted. These considerations must form the material part of this memoir. After the statements of those immediately preceding, it would be poor affectation to attempt disguising the fact, that we consider it as our present duty, to vindicate an illustrious Irishman from a weight of aspersion, of the very lowest and most cowardly kind—cowardly, because it has never been dared, so far as we are yet aware, to venture on any direct or circumstantial accusation, by facts that might be brought home on testimony, or placed in the wrong by the exposure consequent on fair and direct investigation. The injustice we have to notice and stigmatize, has been curiously and even singularly effected by a continued fire of incidental and vague imputations, which, without much meaning, seem to imply more than would be directly hazarded. And as the history of his period, has no popular vehicle but in the political pamphlet and speech—such imputations have gathered public authority from time. The upholders of the system of crime and error, against which it is his honourable distinction to have been the champion of the constitution, have still continued to re-echo the same vague language, with the same malignant feeling; and the consequence is, that many who thoroughly hold the opinions and belong to the same political class as lord Clare, are vaguely impressed, that so much evil and so little good cannot have been written of any man if he had not deserved it. And this is no less than the statement of a question.

The answer to this question is the true history of the time of lord Clare, and the best monument of his life. We shall now be enabled to discuss briefly, as we have already endeavoured in the immediately preceding lives, to lay down at length, with sufficient authority, the grounds of our decisions. We shall now have only to present them in a more arranged and summary form. Indeed, one difficulty alone impedes our intent, and it is one which has accompanied us through all the foregoing statements. Popular errors are so often so very absurdly fallacious, that their exposure cannot escape the charge of

serious trifling. In looking, with many full details before us, on the *whole* facts which are involved in our history, (and all our authorities are popular, many of them republican writers,) the conduct of the government is, with *incidental* exceptions, so entirely right, and their adversaries, by their own admissions, so wholly wrong, that we shrink from the course of truism into which we are compelled to enter. For this, perhaps no apology should be made in a popular history; but we may say that the fault belongs to the corrupt theories, and false, or rather fallacious narratives, which have perverted history, and assassinated the reputation of individuals, both of which it is a part of our duty to rectify.

In 1784, Mr Fitzgibbon was appointed attorney-general. In this important office,—which was due to his professional reputation, as well as to the high qualifications manifested in his parliamentary conduct,—he proved the wisdom of the selection by the firmest opposition to the popular leaders, who, acting as they did, from praiseworthy motives, yet pursued an improvident course, of which the sober constitutional sagacity of the attorney-general could remotely discern the future consequences. Men, such as Mr Grattan and his brilliant circle of associates, having much talent and virtue, but a (necessarily) superficial knowledge of the law and of constitutional workings, were, and always will be, disposed to dwell with disproportioned stress on the trite outlines,—the popular part,—of constitutional science; and this without a sufficiently distinct perception of their precise ends, effects, and applications: the name of *Magna Charta*, of *trial by jury*, *habeas corpus*, &c., familiar as household words, and consecrated by British freedom, with them will take the place of elementary principles. They speak from, and appeal to, splendid prejudices, with an entire unconsciousness of time, place, and public tendencies; and would use the same language in Otaheite as in the British house of commons. In pleading what they looked upon as the cause of Ireland, their recollections of English history, and of the oratory of Chatham and his contemporaries, were floating uppermost in their thoughts. Of the real state, temper, condition, and civilization of the Irish peasantry, they knew little. Of the peculiar constitutional tendencies of Ireland they were *unaccountably heedless*. It did not enter their contemplation, that some of the concessions they contended for were beyond the advance, and inconsistent with the social constitution of the country; that others must be nugatory at the time; that in obtaining some advantages of a doubtful nature, and some which were but nominal, they were employing a destructive instrumentality; some of the consequences of which the wisest of them lamented, but which sober and rightly informed wisdom must have foreseen as inevitable.

It was early seen by Mr Fitzgibbon that the civilization of Ireland was beset on every side by an iron pressure from without; that there were still two distinct communities, of which the civilized was, for some time longer, to be protected from the uncivilized. That such a state of things, anomalous as it was, and accompanied by other gross anomalies, demanded a stronger system of executive power—a truth which no impartial reasoner can miss. It was also a conse-



quence, easy to foresee, that popular requisition might become insatiable; that the sentiment of gratitude is confined to individuals, in their individual capacity; and that concession, while simply considered as such, can only lead to fresh and continual demand. There was one truth more, which was in the compass of Mr Fitzgibbon's observation—that popular requisition, when it happens to be the mere echo of the agitators' demands, has seldom any intent but that of raising and maintaining a struggle against power. When the populace cry aloud for bread, they are sincere; when they ask for parliamentary reform, it is not certain that they know what they mean.—In Ireland, and in Mr Fitzgibbon's time, it is certain they did not. Of this last instance especial notice must, indeed, be here taken. It is to be noted, that the party that was most clamorous about it was that of the United Irishmen. They looked for it as the direct preliminary to republicanism; and they were wise in their generation. We shall presently state, in order, the outline of our reasons for this view.

With views conceived in a spirit of sober, legal, and constitutional knowledge, and wholly opposed to the theatrical legislation of the popular school, Mr Fitzgibbon entered on his most arduous political career, and soon became as remarkable in the house of commons for his eloquence, courage, and firm resolution, as at the bar for legal ability. An instance of his courage and self-possession has been repeated by his biographers, which we ought not to omit here, because it also indicates the sincerity of spirit in which his part was taken. We extract it as it may be found in many recent publications:—"At a time when a popular ferment, produced by various causes, strongly prevailed in the metropolis of Ireland, a general meeting of the inhabitants was, at the requisition of several respectable persons, called by the sheriffs. His lordship, then attorney-general, and one of the most unpopular men in the kingdom, came to the meeting, accompanied only by one or two friends, and forced his way through the mob, who had latterly been in the habit of offering personal insults to those whom they suspected of being adverse to their measures; and getting upon the hustings, interrupted a popular orator in the midst of his harangue. He then told the sheriffs that they had acted illegally in convening the meeting; commanded them to leave the chair; and threatened them with an information *ex officio*, if they presumed to continue it. He then left the astonished and staring assembly, amidst the hisses of the mob, and the sheriffs instantly dissolved the meeting."

Mr Fitzgibbon appreciated at their proper value the hisses of a Dublin rabble; but we think it will be allowed that he showed, on this occasion, the strong masculine energy of that character which his time so eminently required. It was, indeed, a time which demanded all the stronger and rougher virtues, which are constituted to brave danger, to be prompt in emergency, and self-possessed in confusion, and scornful of the comments of opinion.

In the summer of 1789, Mr Fitzgibbon was promoted to the station of lord chancellor; and is said to have been the first native of Ireland who held this dignity. It was a trying moment for the responsibility attached, at that period, to an officer who sat so near the place of

highest authority. He was, at the same time, raised to the peerage, by the title of baron Fitzgibbon of Lower Conelloe. In his legal capacity he is to be praised for the promptitude of his decisions: a quality which, to minds of ordinary power, is sure to suggest the reproach of premature and ill-digested conclusions. But it does not appear, from the only correct test, of appeals, that his judgments were liable to such a reproach. And in this, as in all other things, it must be kept in view that he has been the mark of the most unfavourable misrepresentation, founded on party hostility.

It was the interval between this period and 1798, that brought on the most perilous and appalling crisis in the history of England: the violent shock of the French revolution, which soon shattered to the ground and overwhelmed every other government. In England the eloquence of Burke, the firmness, energy, and practical wisdom of Pitt, the good sense of the British people, aided and directed by a higher Providence, saved the nation. In Ireland it was far different. The same disorganizing opinions which shook England and deluged Europe in blood, fell upon a region capacitated for its reception. A previous military organization—additionally fermented by the organization of the volunteers—a native tendency to conspiracies—a national temper alive to all inflammatory suggestions—an ignorance credulous of every absurdity—poverty, suffering, and discontent, with other causes which we shall presently set out in order, prepared the way for the heaviest visitation of evil that could fall upon a people. While our orators and patriots were making splendid declamations on the constitutional defects and imperfections of a nearly barbarous country, the foundations of society were on the point of falling asunder. They talked of ordering the rooms and arranging the furniture while the house was on fire. Looking with a mind instructed by events, and comprehending the whole compass of incidents, then working up, it is curious how much like academical declamation, now appears much of the powerful oratory of the most celebrated men of that period.

A general view of the history of this country for the thirty years immediately preceding the entrance of lord Clare into public life, discloses a process of social change, not to be paralleled in the history of time. It was modified by the native temperament of the people; by the peculiarities of their position, religious and political, as well as by the operation of circumstances somewhat more casual in their nature. All these have been variously stated, and illustrated in the preceding pages. We must now bring them into their connected and consecutive order. They will, if we mistake not, present the convincing evidence of a chain of causes and effects.

A population, uncivilized and ignorant, and consequently poor and low in the social scale; full of natural vivacity of temperament both in mind and body, and therefore open to the control of impulses and influences; actually subjected to two very powerful influences, religious and political, connected with these more broad, moral, and physical features. Other tendencies not less efficient, are also to be added; a military temper—a love of confederacy, and a spirit of party—an obstinate adhesiveness to standards and notions, and a singular

dislike to new ideas—intellect, acute and subtle, yet slow to learn—keen to observe on the surface, yet not very capable of distinction or combination. These characteristics, very strongly traceable in the Irish peasantry, form, it needs hardly be said, a very striking combination, and characteristic of a people capable of a very high development.

The peasantry thus constituted was for many generations placed within the action of a complex combination of the most disorganizing and corrupting influences. First, a succession of plots, wars, massacres, with the terrible justice of subjugations, attainders, and laws restrictive, coercive, and penal. The awful struggle between an old and new order of things, terminating a state of permanent anarchy and confusion, but itself necessarily fertile in calamity.

Then came a singular state of things. A nation uncivilized, and full of the foregoing elements, yoked to a nation highly matured in laws, manners, knowledge, and wealth, and receiving from the connexion, an infusion of most heterogeneous qualities. A gentry with English language, knowledge, and legal notions, of the Protestant church, and fully instructed in the advantages of the British constitution; with a population wholly unfit for it.

Such are the elementary materials from which our constructions are to be derived, the just and accurate interpretation of a chapter of history which has been perplexed and obscured by the misrepresentation of party statement. It is indeed from their due application that the entire scope of Irish history can alone be correctly composed. We are here to apply them to a narrow point.

Preparatory to the growth of the United Irishmen, and the introduction of republican principles, a secret military organization had been extensively introduced, with the same general intents in 1763. Secret correspondence with France, then not a recent but an ancient custom, was actively carried on, and foreign emissaries were numerous and busily employed in concert with plotting or malcontented Irishmen, to excite an excitable and war-loving populace to the combinations they were so ready to enter. The Whiteboys were the offspring of these exertions. With the usual expertness of conspiracy, pretexts of an open and declared kind concealed the real ends. The people were bound to silence and arms, by an oath already stated.\* We here omit to lay any stress on the fact, that the species of secret correspondence, by which states at war with England never failed to disturb the quiet of Ireland in the same way, by means of emissaries of every description civil or ecclesiastical, had facilitated the practice of this sort of intercourse; which never at any time from the days of red Hugh O'Donnel to Robert Emmet, had entirely ceased, unless for very brief intervals immediately succeeding some dreadful outbreak and its still more fearful suppression. It will suffice to say, that there existed in Ireland, from the combination of causes here enumerated, a constant preparation and predisposition for receiving the slightest breath of hostility to England and the English, or the least encouragement to military organization.

\* Life of Tone, p. 406.



Between the Whiteboy conspiracy, the American war, and the beginning of the French revolution, no intervals worth our consideration occurred. The institution of the volunteers, rising from occasions and among classes wholly distinct from those hitherto adverted upon in this memoir, nevertheless can be shown to have acted upon, and been quickly modified by the constitutional diseases of the land. If we may adopt a physical illustration, a violent inflammatory action having been introduced into certain tissues, hitherto sound, was rapidly diffused into the unhealthy surrounding parts already predisposed to a morbid action, which being thus excited soon pervaded the frame and converted all to disease. The military rage of Ireland was called forth by the fame, the splendour, and the achievements of the volunteers—their kindling oratory, and the well-intended, but not very constitutional meetings, resolutions, and interpositions. The sober, spirited, and high-minded sentiment that called up this body, soon became like the body itself, and all such bodies, copiously adulterated with a baser element. It became louder, bolder, and more peremptory and encroaching. Still it took its tone and shaped its requisitions, from the dictation of its aristocratic leaders, and spoke a constitutional language, though not in a constitutional manner or form: and *thus it was* that there arose the great pretext of parliamentary reform, which was kept so industriously in the front of every scheme.

But at the same time another terrible disorder of a far more energetic, pervading, and fatal type, had been conveyed through its old hereditary channels to the popular mind. The revolutionary fanaticism of the day, which shook even the English constitution to its centre, lighted in Ireland on a more congenial soil. In the former country it was openly impeached and openly confounded by the eloquence of an Irishman; in Ireland it had a different fate. Too refined and subtle in its essential philosophy for an uneducated peasantry, it found among the more educated class immediately above them, a willing acceptance and Irish secrecy.

Hence the United Irishmen. These persons were the boldest, most enterprising, and ablest of the parties to which they belonged; and it, of course, became their policy to avail themselves of the party politics and the system of means actually in existence. Two great pretexts cemented the popular leaders—reform and catholic emancipation.—By the instrumentality of these the essential doctrine of republicanism was to be propagated. The process was simpler than may be thought: it was enough to proselyte a certain number of leading orators. The peasantry required no particular doctrine; for them it would, then, have been enough to ascribe their low condition, their real sufferings, and their imaginary grievances to any cause, and promise redress by any means. Some would follow the spiritual ensign; others their leaders, and all were ready for the sport of arms. But with every class appropriate pretexts were used, and the whole conducted to a common understanding, suitable to the real designs of the United Irishmen, in the expectation of finding their several objects furthered by the aid of France.

These considerations are of the utmost importance to a correct

view of the time.—Without them a student of its history must be misled by the strong statements of the persons concerned in its transactions. Any one who attentively reads the affirmations of O'Connor, Mc'Nevin, T. A. Emmet, &c., when examined by parliamentary committees, must be imposed upon by their strong and not untrue (*but equivocal*) declarations, which attribute none but legitimate objects to their adherents, up to a certain point of time. They did not think it necessary to enlighten the government or expose themselves. They were animated also by a patriotic, though wrongheaded sentiment, and they felt and manifested a strong desire to take the opportunity to lecture their examiners. These gentlemen knew that from the beginning—and it was so whether they understood it or not—that the bulk of their partisans were prepared to follow them to the field, and to join the enemy of England, for any cause or in any name; and that the real question was not as to principles, but as to conduct and designs.

Lastly.—All these circumstances were known to all the classes of society; for every one knows that there are many ways in which a widely-extended state of popular conspiracy transpires, so as without any distinct revelation to communicate a dark impression of terror and alarm. It was fully known to the watchful and sagacious observation of government, and most of all to the person who is the subject of this memoir, that the government was widely undermined by a black and formidable conspiracy in strict concert with France. But, such was the perfect organization for secrecy that no available clue could be ascertained, for two years, while the preparation was approaching its highest point.

Such is the summary statement of a series of events and causes, all of which have been separately detailed through the previous memoirs. They have been here brought thus together, because it is only thus that the character and conduct of lord Clare is to be fairly judged. On him the whole weight of the popular resentment has been thrown. A dangerous faction of misjudging men, disappointed in their desperate scheme by the vigour and wisdom of his counsels, very naturally entertained a strong animosity against him. It was vented, too, as such passions ever are, in acrimonious invective. This derived its material from two very obvious and ready sources; the same which, in similar circumstances, have ever furnished the missiles of party abuse.

It was alleged that a harsh and unconciliating policy was designedly adopted; and all the disastrous consequences of a civil strife were imputed to the immediate will of the government. We do not think there could have been any sincerity in these calumnious imputations; but they were received by the people, and they have been repeated from pen to pen, until the time for contradiction has nearly past; and they are now very inconsiderately reasserted by persons who would, perhaps, be quite incapable of any intentional injustice.

These imputations are distinguishable into three:—That the insurrection was encouraged with a view to facilitate the measure of the Union; that the government, with this view, exercised great cruelties; and that they neglected those measures of concession



which would have conciliated the people. These three charges are all resolvable into that one already mentioned—the answer to which would, of course, be sufficient, were we here engaged in merely mooted the point with party writers. But it is to be observed, that the facts stated are charges independent of any question as to motives. If the government is liable to the charge of wrongs alleged, it little matters to prove that they were not deliberately contrived to favour the Union. Some few remarks will not, therefore, be here superfluous on each of these points.

Any one who may have fairly read the statements hitherto made, cannot fail to see that the Union was suggested, and the idea of its necessity enforced, by a long succession of incidents, among which the strongest were those very circumstances which have been pretended to have been artifices for its promotion. It had become very plain that no concessions could have the pretended effect of conciliating, and that (and a little knowledge of human nature should have prevented such an error) the contrary must needs be, and ever was, the effect produced. The fact had become, indeed, so evident that Mr Grattan, and other observing men, were strongly influenced by the consideration. It had become apparent that when all that had been asked was given, a more petulant and refining spirit of exaction began to show itself, to such an extent, that Charlemont, Grattan, and the entire respectability of the party was separated, and Mr Grattan offended the party by his moderating counsels. The reader may recollect how strongly he expressed his fear that it would be thought that no concessions could satisfy the popular party. Indeed, it would be of much use to the public of every age, were it popularly explained, that the leaders of popular demand (which may be, and has been, at times, fortuitously right,) will act for the mere purpose of exciting and governing a popular ferment about anything, and that all they want is power and popularity; to embody popular spirit, to place the government in difficulties, and to promote themselves and their personal interests. The people are, *necessarily*, ignorant of the real merits of the question; but will, of course, adopt and embrace, with all their passions, whatever they are told by their leaders, whether it be that they are not represented in parliament, or that they are defrauded of their legitimate share of moonshine. They have no political knowledge, and are wholly moveable at the will of the leader who can best seize and turn to his purpose their natural propensities.—This is, however, a digression.

A succession of incidents made it apparent that there must continue to be unceasing collision between the two kingdoms and between their parliaments. It was not merely the result of the regency question, already stated; it was evident that the Irish parliament was liable to the external pressure of a "fierce democracy," and that it was with difficulty, and by resources neither permanent nor desirable, fortified against its irruptions. This democracy was half-revolutionized, in a time when England was menaced by revolution, and clouds of war collecting around her. Reform, then first assuming an imposing shape, came mixed with the pretensions and principles of republicanism, and menaced with destruction those institutions which



it affected to repair or correct. In the Irish parliament it was easy for every one who could lay aside an inapplicable theory (that of the British constitution), and look at actual workings, to see that it was not wanting, and would have thrown that body entirely into the hands of the very lowest leaders of the rabble. Even the popular orators would have been set aside. But while the measure demanded was thus unfit for Ireland, its concession would have carried with it consequences injurious to the safety of the British empire. The clamour for reform had commenced in England, where it was purely the suggestion of a democratic opposition. Now it is quite evident that if such a measure had been granted to Ireland, it could not, for a day, be delayed in England, where, though its effects might have been less and slower, they would have been essentially revolutionary.

The steps immediately leading to the Union were preceded by all the concession that could be even thought of:—free trade, legislative independence, independence of the law courts, and, lastly, catholic emancipation. Coincidentally with these concessions a fiercer spirit of exaction grew up, republican principles began to spread, and a demand, which it *was known* could not be granted (for the reasons above stated), was dexterously put forward, to keep up the ferment, which Mr Tone and his active friends feared would die away from the effects of catholic emancipation. They neglected no seasonable restorative, and found themselves agreeably mistaken.

These are evidently not the steps of a design to irritate; they plainly, and beyond all reasonable question, are the plain indications of a desire to conciliate, carried to the very utmost limits of compliance.

That these compliances were strenuously opposed in their progress through the legislature, is a point we need not labour here—such opposition being that of individuals, may be safely referred to the grounds of opposition which they stated. We are only here concerned with the cabinet, or rather with the actual allegations of certain popular historians.

The conclusions, to which the reasons hitherto stated lead, are, that conciliation was carried at least as far as sound policy admitted, and this without any ulterior intent; that all concession was wholly ineffective; that it produced effects of an opposite tendency; that the demand at which the government stopped was a step not to be taken; that, so far as the democratic leaders of the people were concerned, it was no more than a pretext; that a conspiracy, having dangerous designs, with other destructive influences, then menacing both kingdoms as well as Europe, was perceptibly spreading by mysterious channels.

Such was the state of things in which the Union was seriously meditated by the British government; and every single part of the combination had long precedence of any conceivable purpose. That insurrection-acts and arms-bills, should irritate conspirators, is certainly to be admitted; but when all who were not engaged in it, were in a state of terrified suspense, and when the members of the government were kept in perplexity and fear, it is surely somewhat of supererogation to say, that they took precautionary measures of the most urgent necessity, for the purpose of irritation. The sup-

position is simply absurd.—One fact ought for ever to repress such gratuitous misstatements: Mr Tone, who knew something of what was preparing and of what was designed, admits that the conduct of the Irish administration was judicious and able. He stigmatizes lord Clare as the adversary to republicanism; but he admits that nothing less than the means he employed could have prevented it. A phrase used by lord Castlereagh, in the examination of Dr M'Nevin, has been laid hold of. It is liable, indeed, to much question, but does not bear on the charge as yet examined; because it is accompanied by an admission on the part of M'Nevin, to which it is directly to be referred, that the organization in which the United Irishmen were engaged, preceded "the measures taken to make it explode."

That measures for such a purpose should or should not be taken, is a question wholly distinct. We do not mean to argue it; because we cannot, without much inconvenience, complete the outline we have, perhaps without enough reckoning the inconvenience, undertaken. To rouse a people to rebellion for political ends is an unquestionable crime, one that admits of no apology.—They who prefer the charge should weigh it well. But it is wholly distinct from the question here involved, and we are only concerned to state plainly the nature of the case.

We have but to assume the precise conditions already stated as the actual facts; viz., an organized conspiracy, connected (or even supposed to be connected) with a design of meditated invasion, and actuated by the purpose of effecting a revolution on the principles then terrifying the world; that this conspiracy was supposed to be advancing with impenetrable secrecy to those objects, and becoming every hour more dangerous. On such conditions a question arises as to what the government could do. It may be asked—for these are the questions actually involved—is the government to await the event, without any precautions, because the only efficient *precautions* consist in means which may have the effect of exciting a *premature* display? Are such means for any reason unjustifiable, when, in reference to such a question, it is recollected that the measures alleged to be taken to draw the conspiracy from its concealment, are the same measures by which it was defeated, and the kingdom saved from destruction? The answer will be easy.—If the measures were, indeed, wrong measures, and uncalled for by the urgency of the occasion, without any perceptible end but to create popular irritation, the case would be that pretended by M'Nevin. But the fact actually was, that measures, most emergently required, against a conspiracy which only waited to increase its strength and obtain aid from France, also offered a chance of drawing them out of their concealment.

But several instances of the most dreadful cruelty are stated to have occurred. We have not the means of contradicting these assertions; but we unhesitatingly deny that such cases, if they are truly alleged, have any connexion with the charge just examined. It would appear to be trifling, were we to argue so frivolous a point. Something must, nevertheless, be said; for the charge is, in itself, of serious concern, and has been reiterated until it has acquired a force



beyond its meaning, and been confounded in the popular mind with the charges already answered! To see what its weight is, we shall admit it in the fullest extent in which it has been alleged.

When concession, so far as it was in any way admissible, had failed to satisfy the United Irishmen, when (to adopt their own statement,) an impracticable measure, which would have amounted to a democratic revolution, was rejected, they then, as they admit, entered into communication with France, and organized a most extensive and dangerous conspiracy—so great that their own advocates affirm, that nothing but the treachery of Reynolds saved the kingdom. The government were in a state of terror and alarm, quite justifiable, according to the allegations of the rebel chiefs themselves. In this state of things there was *but one* sure course for any government, not absolutely suicidal, to pursue. It was a course of necessarily severe and unrelaxing self-defence, to the very utmost length such a course could be applied. It was no case of criminal law for the slow and uncertain arm of executive justice—they might as well have sent out a special commission of judges to arrest the French fleet upon its way. It was a rebellion ambushed for the moment of explosion, and the lives and properties of the respectable loyal classes were on the verge of a bloody extinction—so it was known to be, and so the leaders admit. In such a state of peril all means are lawful—which may be allowed in open insurrection,—for, in principle there is no difference. And the duty of the government is to resort to open force against concealed treachery: there was an armed foe in the realm. So far the case is free from difficulty; and the manner alone remains. This will be found, as it has ever been, to be dependent on the agents used. The application of force can only be effected through the police and the army of a country.

Now, at that time, the force in Ireland was, unfortunately, in both respects, of the very worst character; weak in numbers, low in discipline, and consequently inferior in their moral character—they were detached on service under a sense of stringent emergency, and that service in its nature *detective*: their passions may have been roused by the scowl and sneer of one class of the people; they were fired by the complaints and terrors of another. Human nature, always the same when the passions of common men are exasperated, might, under such circumstances, produce greater cruelties than are alleged; and they who have made the charges have uniformly omitted to notice the numerous and incessant provocations. But with this we are here not concerned. It was the misfortune of the peasantry to have rendered themselves strictly amenable to extralegal proceedings; and the inquisitorial proceedings most brutally used in a few instances by cruel officials, though deeply to be deplored and condemned, did not amount to a wrong against the *people* or the *sufferers*; they were an offence against humanity; but the offence was confined to the individual who committed it. It had the palliation of emergency and strong provocation—and the plea of exaggeration. It was directed to a right purpose, and was counterbalanced a hundred fold by similar offences which had no such plea.

As we have already intimated, most of what we have thus summarily



thrown together, in order that its collective force might be the more easily discerned by such of our readers as are not familiar with the events of the time, is only to be fully proved by very large details. The life of Theobald Wolfe Tone, or rather his confessions, accompanied by the incautious commentary of his son, goes far, indeed, to confirm all these statements. This work should be read by any one who would understand this portion of our history. The examination of the United Irishmen, in 1798, interpreted by collateral circumstances, will also be found useful for the same purpose. But of this testimony there is somewhat to be observed. The testimony of these gentlemen was equivocal throughout. With respect to facts, they were aware that they had nothing to communicate or conceal; but it was their express desire to strike a blow for their party; or, as they (perhaps sincerely) called it, their country. Were there any reason for doubting this, it is met by explanations afterwards given by the most authoritative of them, Thomas Addis Emmet. According to his account, they anticipated (or conceived that they anticipated,) the motives of government for their examination to be the purpose of "rendering unpopular and unsuspected, men in whom the United Irishmen had been accustomed to place unbounded confidence;" they came to the determination of baffling these objects; and, as Mr Emmet says, "We did not hesitate to devote ourselves, that we might make terms for our country." These statements are of much importance. As they had, in fact, no other object, it is quite plain that they are simply to be considered as antagonists who enter upon the discussion of a contested political creed. They had, by the bargain they had made, (one proposed on their own part,) secured their lives; for once their *opinions* were admitted to be the price of safety, it was plain that they could not be hanged for mistakes. They stood before the committees, therefore, free from all apprehension, and in the spirit of opposition—a fact, indeed, glaring enough in the report which they have themselves given, and the comments which accompany it. The consequence which we mean to infer from this is, that their statements have no weight whatever, except so far as they conclude against themselves. Their opinions but involve the very questions at issue; but their admissions are *ex adverso*, and have a strong weight. With these precautionary remarks, we would strongly recommend these examinations to the attentive perusal of every one who desires full information on the subject. Three main points are strongly stated in them: that their object was parliamentary reform; that they had not turned their minds to revolution, until they despaired of this object, and that there would have been no insurrection but for certain cruelties on the part of the government. Now, of these affirmations, two are to be looked on as mere advocacy, (or perhaps a very common sort of error,) being partially true in words, but wholly false in their intent in reality. They were quite aware that the armed organization had been in preparation long antecedent to these incidents and opinions. This they indeed admit; they were also aware that most of their leaders and promoters were, from the beginning, men who propagated republican principles. They were, indeed, quite sincere in looking for reform, and in their resenting its denial, for they well knew

it was no more than the shortest and securest road to the object they had at heart. The reformed House of Commons they knew would be but a *fac simile* of the national convention, and would run through all its crazed lapse of degradations. On this point they were *true and hollow*. But they admitted enough to justify the stringent measures of government. We shall here select a few extracts, premising that we extract from *their own report*.

Doctor M'Nevin having stated that certain reforms would have satisfied the people, lord Castlereagh observed, "They would have been satisfied to effect a revolution through a reform!" M'Nevin, "If a change of system be in one way or other inevitable, of which, gentlemen, I have no doubt, and which you cannot yourselves but think highly probable, who can be so much interested in its happening peaceably as you are," &c. Speaker, "Don't you think that the people would abolish the church establishment and tithes?" M'Nevin, "I have no idea of a *reformed parliament* that would not act according to the interests and *known wishes* of the people," &c. [thus affirming the speaker's supposition.] J. C. Beresford, "Will you tell me, Sir, what you understand by a free House of Commons?" Doctor M'Nevin, "One which should be *annually* and freely returned by the people," &c. We ought to observe that there may be points of opinion, and even of argument contained in the answers of these persons, just enough; but that we are simply extracting to convey information on certain specific points. Through Doctor M'Nevin's statements, there runs an implied, but obviously fallacious, distinction between the armed organization of the people, and any design of insurrection; and on the force of this it is that he is enabled to maintain his main ground, that they did not think of insurrection till they were provoked by government. It was the apology of the highwayman, I did not intend to shoot until the purse was refused and the hand lifted. He was asked by the Speaker, "Would not the organization have gone on, and the union become stronger, but that the insurrection was brought on too soon?" Doctor M'Nevin, "The organization would have proceeded, and the union would have derived that strength which arises from order," &c. Mr Emmet's examination offers some curious answers: he thus states an important principle which he conceived would govern the course of the proposed revolution in whatever way it should be brought to pass; and we have no doubt of the process. He speaks particularly with reference to the church establishment, (which is not involved in this discussion.) Emmet, "I can't pay so bad a compliment to the reasons which have convinced myself, as not to suppose they will convince others. As the human mind grows *philosophic*, it will, I think, wish for the destruction of all religious establishments; and therefore in proportion as the catholic mind becomes philosophic, it will, of course, entertain the same wishes; but I consider that as the result of its philosophy and not of its religion." A curious illustration of the thorough infatuation of popular excitements—a proposition which we have often stated in these memoirs—here, according to Mr Emmet, (who, we suspect, does no injustice to his accomplices,) we have the head of the atheist governing the hands and hearts of the superstitious multitude, for common destruction of all they revered.



After stating that a revolution must take place with or without an organization, Mr Emmet dexterously enough states that he thought organization the best means of moderating the fury of the revolution. He is then questioned as to the effective force of the organization, which he states at a gross total of half a million, or about six hundred thousand fighting men "in the union." He also states, that two modes of accomplishing the objects next their hearts presented themselves to their view; one was a reform [annual parliaments and universal suffrage] by peaceable means; the other a revolution and a republic," &c. Now, here let it be observed, that it is distinctly stated, that reform was looked to as the means of revolution—the actual truth;—but in direct contradiction to the statement already quoted, which asserts the converse of this proposition. Such are, indeed, the prevarications of falsehood, from which even the practice of deception could not guard these most fraudulent and spurious witnesses. All this, and much to the same effect, gave no information, as Mr Emmet himself states, to the government; but we trust it may convey much to the reader. Our comment has been already made as to what Emmet, M'Nevin, &c., thought, or pretended to think, right or safe. Though they may have imagined that their visionary ideas of reform might justify a revolution by force—or that an armed organization was a most innocuous toy, provided all wishes of the people should be conceded—every man of common sense will see, that their fallacies, whether they were the quibbles of advocacy, or the follies of perverted reason, could not alter the reality of the desperate position of risk and emergency in which they show the country to have been placed. All reflecting persons who can estimate the tendencies of human nature, must be convinced, that any of the courses they proposed, or pretended to propose, must have terminated in one result. Talking of the wishes of the people, there is one admission, too instructive to be omitted, which may for the present conclude these quotations:—"Pray," asked lord Clare, "do you think that catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform are any object with the common people? Emmet, "As to catholic emancipation, I don't think it matters a feather, or that the poor think of it. As to parliamentary reform, I don't think the common people ever thought of it, until it was inculcated to them that a reform would cause a removal of those grievances which they actually do feel," &c. Now this is a comment of universal application. It states directly the same most important truth which in the last previous paragraph, we endeavoured to illustrate from the statements of the same gentleman: the wishes of the people are the suggestions of a few leaders; and consequently to govern the people according to their wishes—so strongly inculcated by these and such other men—means no more than this, that it is the duty of those to whom the government of a country is committed to be governed by the intimations and requisitions of the demagogue;—the state policy of a circle of cracked republicans, who were ready to fraternize with the blood-thirsty visionaries, the *poissardes* and the *sans culottes* of Paris, ought to have been reverently acceded to by men such as lord Clare.

Some further particulars personally respecting these men we reserve for a separate memoir. It will here suffice to say, that the ex-



amination from which we have made our extracts, is a remarkable instance of the clemency of the very government against which they betrayed so vindictive a spirit. It was resorted to, to save their lives. They showed the utmost ingratitude. They showed, also, a most vehement and undue resentment when the state of foreign affairs, and a sense of the character they displayed on their examination, made some delay necessary in their liberation. They amply justified this delay: when they were set free, their very first step was to enter into negotiations with France. We shall treat these facts further on with the fulness they deserve.

We can truly assure our candid readers, that it has been with no feeling of pleasure that we have now, through the last few memoirs, adopted the tedious analysis into which we have entered. But if the fair and just motive is not apparent, our labour has been vain indeed. If the illustrious and able man, whose stern resolution and eminent ability steered his country through the dreadful trials of that time, were again to be endowed with the cognisance of present opinions; he might well be surprised that time, which has so often been said to set right the errors of popular opinion, has yet left his character, like a suit in chancery, to be painfully argued in half a century from his own time. He would have to be apprized, that, unhappily, the mind of this country has, with its ancient fidelity to its errors, been tied fast to the same little wheel of prejudices, of which the disorderly movements once gave him so much to do. The same parties, agitated by the same passions, views, and desires, still continue to battle with similar opinions; and he is now as much the object of abusive declamation as of old.

He had been created earl of Clare, in 1795: in 1799, his signal merits were rewarded by the peerage of the United Kingdom, to which he was raised by the title of lord Fitzgibbon of Sudbury.

In the British parliament his efforts were not destined to be many, or of long duration. He would have appeared in some respects to advantage, and in others to disadvantage. His close and solid style of reasoning, was more adapted to the cultivated ear of the British peerage than that of others of his countrymen. But the topics with which he would have had to deal were replete with difficulty. The most enlightened Englishman knew little, indeed, of Ireland; the moral and intellectual condition of the mass of its population; or of the essential principles on which alone its government had been able to stand; or the desperate emergencies, for which the constitutional remedies were prompt exertions of the executive power. They thought of England when Ireland was spoken of, and looked on every question in which it was concerned, with the jealousy which has helped to guard the British constitution. The state of Ireland, as we have described it, was hard to believe; for it was hard to conceive. Hence those who impugned the policy of the Irish government had an audience prepossessed in their favour. The declamations of Mr Fox, and the diffusion of popular sentiments, from the same source as those of the United Irishmen, had instilled certain maxims and propositions, the same which now may be called liberalism; and, as always must happen when a strong sentiment occupies the public mind, it more or less

influences and modifies the views of every party. Lord Clare would thus have had to address an uninformed assembly, in opposition to strong misstatements which derived a spurious power from misapprehension. Yet when we read the various misstatements and ill-conceived motions in the British parliament, by which the conduct of the earl of Clare and the Irish administration were so palpably misrepresented, we cannot help lamenting that the reply was not heard in the same house and recorded in the same pages.

The good and benevolent earl of Moira, animated by a spirit of philanthropic liberality, to which the name of liberalism would not be quite inappropriate, had, at different times, brought forward statements replete with strong pictures of the sufferings and calamities of Ireland. He was heated by a warm humanity, and enlightened by a popular spirit. He was a good and a public-spirited nobleman; but though virtue may supply the better part of wisdom, it is not all-sufficient in questions that are entangled with a multitude of prejudices and strong feelings. His aims were pure, but he was incapable of looking below the surface, or taking into account anything more than met his outward senses. In a word, the representations he made omitted every essential fact, and could have little effect in the Irish parliament. He was ably replied to by lord Grenville and by the marquis of Downshire. The charges which were made by his lordship, and after him, by other peers, are the same which we have already discussed at length, and shall not enter upon further here. They were immediately repeated in the Irish house of lords, by the same nobleman, and met, from the chancellor, a prompt and masterly refutation.—This occurred on February 19, 1798. From this speech we shall offer a few extracts, as specimens of a better style of eloquence than is generally supposed to have existed in our parliament.

Speaking of the system of the United Irishmen, and the manner in which they had spread and concealed their principles, his lordship said, "The resources of the union are the seduction of the lower orders of the people, under the specious pretext of freedom and equality, and every artifice, which cunning and profligacy can suggest, has been practised to detach them from the established government and constitution. The press has been used, with singular success, as an engine of rebellion; sedition and treason have been circulated with unceasing industry, in newspapers, and pamphlets, and handbills, and speeches, and republican songs, and political manifestoes. Robbery, assassinations, and massacre are the efficient powers of the union, and are executed with prompt and unerring vigour, by the order of every member of the executive, in their several departments. The communication of their orders is so managed as to render detection almost impossible. Each society has its secretary, from the general executive down to the lower subordinate clubs, the members of which are generally used as the agents of the union in all acts of outrage; and every order is communicated by the secretary of the superior committee, to the secretary of that committee or society which is next in immediate subordination to it. No subordinate knows, of whom its next superior is composed; the accredited secre-



tary vouches the order; from him it is received implicitly, and is communicated in like manner, till it reaches every member of the union to whom it is addressed. The order is, generally, verbal; but if it be reduced to writing, the moment the person who is to receive and communicate it is fully instructed, the paper is destroyed. Here, then, is a complete revolutionary government organized against the laws and established constitution; and let me ask the noble lord whether such a combination is to be met or counteracted, much less dissolved, by the slow and technical forms of a regular government; an invisible power of infinite subtlety and extent, which has no fixed or permanent station; which acts by the ungoverned fury of a desperate and savage race, and scatters universal desolation and dismay at its sovereign will and pleasure. \* \* \* When every gentleman, who had courage to remain in his country, was marked for assassination, and had no protection under his own roof but from a military guard; when a plan was actually formed, and nearly ripe for execution, to disarm and cut off the soldiery thus dispersed in small bodies for the protection of individuals; when a fierce and savage foreign enemy hung upon the Irish coast, what alternative remained for the executive government, but to surrender at discretion to a horde of traitorous barbarians, or to use the force intrusted to it for self-defence and self-preservation; and what would have been the folly and debility of the government which could have hesitated to exert itself with vigour and decision at such a crisis? Lord Camden did not hesitate; but, as became him, issued an order on the 3d of March, to disarm the rebels in the northern districts; and if he had not issued the order, I do not scruple to say that he would have betrayed his trust."

Hitherto, since entering upon this portion of our history, it has been the main object of our statements to disembarass it from certain fallacies with which it has been entangled, to an extent, that has corrupted the very language of one great class of political writers; and imposed on the other, to a great degree, the necessity of false admissions, most pernicious in their effect. The result of our most careful and conscientious attention to statements, which, with very little exception, we have drawn from the most democratic writers, has been now summarily presented in this memoir. These considerations have mainly regarded the origin of certain associations, and the respective principles and motives of the parties involved on either side. This object has much restricted our details of the events, to which we have referred, simply, as the grounds of an argument.

We shall now avail ourselves of this memoir to offer a brief narrative of the memorable events of the rebellion of 1798.

While the leaders of the United Irishmen were organizing a revolution, which, owing to the wisdom and vigour of the subject of this memoir, and the mercy of God's providence, they were not permitted to effect; they actually promoted an insurrection, not less bloody, though, happily, more brief, than that of 1641. The United Irishmen continued, from their institution, to increase in numbers and improve in discipline; but it was not till 1796, that the directory began to see prospects, from which encouragement could be drawn for any



immediate or decided course of proceeding. Until then, it was not thought safe to disclose their actual intentions to the lower ranks of the union, who were sufficiently kept in the necessary state of irritation, by strong representations of their grievances, and by vague promises of relief. But at last the hope of effectual aid by means of a French invasion, gave the desired occasion for more open and more active steps. Of the negotiations consequently set on foot with the French Directory, we have given some account in the previous memoirs. The understanding, that there was to be an immediate rising, was now universally propagated among the peasantry; and the project of *separation* from England spread, in conjunction with every other political doctrine by means of which they had been hitherto agitated. These may be generally enumerated: They were to be relieved from hearth-money, tithes, cess, and their rents were to be lowered. A general hurry of preparation arose, and the first object was to obtain arms. In the county of Louth considerable bodies of men began to assemble in the night: the example spread into Meath, Cavan, and Monaghan. They began with plundering private houses of arms, and ended by the plunder of everything. In all their movements, there were evident indications of the agency of persons of a higher order. Large sums of money were collected from the peasantry, by all the usual and well-known expedients. In the north of Ireland all these proceedings had been long prepared, and were in a more advanced state. In that quarter, the animosity of the people had been worked by opposition to a higher state of excitement—for such is the natural effect of opposition; the immediate presence of an opposite party of men, animated by a strong spirit of loyalty, and determined on protecting themselves and their homes from robbery and destruction, awakened a fearful conflict of strong passions and fierce exasperations on either side. A religious turn was communicated to resentment, fierce enough already. As the insurgents, being of the lower rank, were mostly of the church of Rome, and the loyalists mainly of the church of England, it is quite easy to see the progress by which this paramount and general distinction would quickly absorb all other considerations. This happened more especially among the united men; and thus the rebellion received its most fearful aggravation—the character of a religious war;—most fatal—because, to the extreme ignorance of the peasant, it is easily made the justification of every crime.

The French uniform was adopted among the upper ranks of the union. In Dublin a regiment was organized, and called the First National Battalion. Their uniform was green, turned up with white; white waistcoat, and striped trowsers, and gilt buttons with the impression of a harp, surmounted with a cap of liberty upon a pike. Generally, great quantities of arms, ammunition, and several pieces of ordnance, were in their possession.

In the month of April, 1797, an assembly of their committees was surprised in Belfast, and their papers seized, by colonel Barber. These papers contained the fullest disclosures of their forces, arms, and means. They stated a total of 72,206 men. In one of them it was declared that “our friends are soon expected in Bantry.” This

declaration is followed by the advice, to distress the government by refusing bank notes and rejecting the use of exciseable commodities.

The government was not remiss. It began by the trial of menaces and promises of amnesty—neither of which produced the least effect. A general insurrection was planned and decided upon. A partial rising took place in the county of Down; but the army was promptly put in motion, and the rebels, finding no support, dispersed. This incident operated as a transient check; numbers took the benefit of the proclamation of pardon, and vast quantities of arms were seized in that province.

In consequence there followed an interval of quiet, and hopes began to arise that the danger was blown over. In Munster and Conaught strong professions of loyalty were made, and many societies ceased to meet.

But the reader who has pursued the statements of these memoirs, is aware how illusory such expectations must have been. The government, while they saw the whole extent of the meditated insurrection, had not been able, with all their efforts, to penetrate the fold within which the main-spring lay. O'Connor, and Emmet, and M'Nevin, with their accomplices, men of high energy, courage, and talent, held the cords of popular insubordination with a firm grasp, and found, or could find, no difficulty in restoring their influence and repairing the web of popular infatuation.

Among the means to which these gentlemen resorted for this last mentioned purpose, there was one especially to be noticed and stigmatized, not only for its atrocity, but as causing most of the enormities afterwards perpetrated by the deluded populace. They fabricated and circulated tests which they pretended were taken to exterminate the papists; and raised reports that large bodies of protestants were on their way to execute this diabolical design. They also had recourse to very active attempts to seduce the soldiery, for which purpose papers of seditious purport were printed and distributed among them.

In the mean time those negotiations with the French Directory, already described, were carried on, and increasing expectations of an invasion added to the excitement. The failure of the Bantry Bay expedition, left it still an earnest of sincerity; and another and more effective effort was looked for with anxious impatience. A premature rising was feared by the Irish directory and fresh agents were despatched to France.

At the same time, a difference of opinion arose between the Northern leaders and those of Leinster. The former pressed an immediate rising; the latter were for awaiting the arrival of the French. The Northerners proposed to seize the castle of Dublin, and to trust to the rabble for assistance; but some precautions, adopted in the Dublin garrison, discouraged this design.

The year 1798 brought with it a fiercer determination, more advanced and more energetic preparations. The whole details of a general rising were now framed, and the orders distributed through the kingdom to generals, adjutants, colonels, &c., &c. The storm was preceded by suitable indications; nightly assassinations and housebreakings increased so as to cause general terror, and in many districts the peace-

ful inhabitants, and those who were known for their loyalty, were in great numbers compelled to seek refuge in the garrisoned towns. These depredations daily became more imposing; the town of Cahir was attacked in open day by 800 men, most of them on horseback, and every house robbed of its arms.

Providentially, in the midst of these alarms, when no one could yet measure or anticipate the blow thus menaced, a great discovery, to be more fully detailed in a subsequent memoir, took place. The leaders were arrested on the 12th of March, at the house of Oliver Bond, in Bridge Street. Their papers disclosed the whole plan, according to which Dublin, the camp at Laughlinstown, and the fortifications near Chapelizod were to have been surprised simultaneously by the concurrent attacks of the rebel force of Dublin, Wicklow, and Kildare. The apprehension of lord Edward Fitzgerald, and others followed. The most prompt and energetic arrangements were made by the government to defeat these efforts, and so far they were completely frustrated.

But a motion so extensive and powerful as we have hitherto described, could not be suddenly checked by the defeat of a plan, or by the seizure of leaders who were not even generally known to those whose movements they had hitherto controlled as from a secret centre. The propagated impulse, little connected with plan, rolled on. Among the signals previously concerted, the stoppage of the mail coaches was to give assurance to the Directory that their orders were carried into effect throughout the country. The orders were given out for a rising on the 23d of May, by a committee which had met immediately after the arrest of lord Edward Fitzgerald.

On the night of that day, the northern mail was stopped at Santry, by a line of cars drawn across the road. It was surrounded by armed men, who spoke in very civil terms, and, evidently to prevent resistance, assured the passengers that their object was to preserve the mails from being seized by a body of rebels which was waiting their approach further on. Terror is easily induced to admit of such excuses, the coachman, guard, and passengers left the coach in their hands, persuading themselves that all was right; in a few minutes they saw the coach burning. A thousand men were assembled in a field close by. The passengers were allowed to pass in safety, and even some of the letters were returned to the post office. The same event happened to the mail between Lucan and Leixlip.

On the next day, an encounter took place at a place called Saggard, near Tallaght, between a considerable force of the rebels well armed and mounted, and the yeomanry corps of the place—the yeomanry were compelled to give way. Lord Roden at the head of a party of the 5th dragoons, very quickly arriving, a conflict took place, in which the rebels were defeated; three only were killed, but thirty prisoners were taken, with a large quantity of pikes.

On the 25th an attack was made on the town of Naas, by about a thousand rebels—they poured in on every direction, having seized on all the approaches to the town. They were stoutly met by the garrison under lord Gosford, and major Wardle, and after a very sharp conflict, which lasted nearly an hour, they were put to flight on



every side—the cavalry took advantage of their confusion, and charging killed a great many. In all there were 130 slain and a great quantity of arms taken; and many more shortly after found in pits in the neighbourhood.

Several other smart encounters occurred in different places on the same day. Near and in Stratford-on-Slaney a rebel party of 500, on their way to Baltinglass were, as it would seem by accident, attacked in front and rear by two different corps of military—a party of 20 dragoons was attacking them in front, when captain Sannford came up with part of his company. The rebels were quickly scattered, leaving 200 slain; many also among the fugitives were wounded.

A military party in the town of Prosperous, met with a different fate; their barrack was surprised and set on fire—and being locked up, the whole detachment was destroyed. The rebels, in their triumph, slaughtered several of the citizens, among whom was Mr Stanner the proprietor of the chief part of the town.

It would now serve no purpose to state the particulars of the numerous lesser engagements, which occurred nearly at the same time. At Clare—between Barnetstown and Kildare—near Lucan—near Lusk—at Ballymore—there were encounters, in all of which but one, the rebels, after more or less resistance were well beaten. The affair near Barnetstown was the surprise of a small party of fencibles on the march—they escaped, but their baggage was taken.

A severe conflict took place near Kilcullen on the 24th. A strong party of the rebels had assembled on the north bank of the river Liffey, and an account came to lieutenant-general Dundas, that they were advancing on the town of Kilcullen. The general marched to attack them. The following is his account of the fight:—"They occupied the hills on the left of the road leading to Dublin, the road itself, and the field highly enclosed on the right. The attack began between three and four, and was made with great gallantry; the infantry forcing the enemy on the road, and driving them from the hills to the left; the cavalry with equal success cutting off their retreat. The affair ended soon after four; the slaughter was considerable for such an action; 130 lay dead, no prisoners. His majesty's troops did not suffer in either killed or wounded. The rebels left great quantities of arms behind them, and fled in all directions."

In some places where the rebel parties, which moved in all directions, were uninterrupted by the military, they committed many outrages. On the 25th of May, another combat of considerable importance occurred near Hacketstown. Here, between three and four thousand rebels were defeated by a small corps of soldiery and yeomanry, and 500 slain. And on the same day a large body of rebels suffered a severe defeat near Dunlavin, leaving 300 on the field.

The reader may have observed that all these affairs, hitherto mentioned, occurred within two days, the 24th and 25th of May.

On the 26th the battle of Tara took place. As this battle has been considered of some importance, we shall go a little more fully into its details.

The atrocities committed in the neighbourhood between Dunboyne and Dunshaughlin for some days previous to the 26th, had excited the

utmost sensation of terror and alarm among the inhabitants, and the several small parties of the yeomanry and soldiers on garrison duty in the nearest towns were earnestly applied to. On the 24th, captain Preston of the Navan cavalry, and Mr Barry lieutenant of the same, applied to captain Molloy who commanded at Kells, to join them; and captain Preston having learned that some companies of a fencible regiment were in Navan on the evening of the 25th, on their march to Dublin, went to meet them there, to persuade the officer in command to join them in attacking the rebels who were in great force that day at Dunshaughlin. The officer of the fencibles complied. But on the next morning it was found that the rebels had withdrawn; and as they did not know whither, the officer of fencibles came to the determination to proceed upon his way to Dublin. The yeomanry, too, were bent on returning to their houses. If these steps had been permitted, the consequences might have been highly disastrous, as the rebels were rapidly concentrating from all quarters, while there was no adequate preparation to resist them. Captain Preston, on this emergency, acted with praiseworthy decision and promptitude. We shall extract the account of his conduct from Sir Richard Musgrave, as it cannot with justice be abridged. "Captain Preston, now lord Tara, then followed the Reay fencibles, who had proceeded two miles on their march, and informed the commanding officer that he would engage to find out the rebels in two hours, if he would consent to stay; but having refused to comply, he informed him that he would proceed to Dublin, and obtain an order from the lord lieutenant for him to return before he could proceed half-way upon his march; on which he consented to return, and gave him two hundred men and one battalion gun."

With this small corps and the yeomanry commanded by lord Fingal and himself, he now set out in quest of the rebels, and found them on the hill of Tara. Here his small force appeared not very formidable to the multitude who looked down upon them from the steep side and summit of the hill, exulting, as the Irish peasantry can exult, in the consciousness of courage and the illusory sense of strength which numbers commonly give. They had swept together the plunder of the surrounding country, and were engaged in preparing their meal; white flags were fluttering in the wind over their heads; and they looked defiance down upon the 400 men who stood ready to attack them below. When the soldiers caught their attention, they "put three hats on the top of pikes, sent forth some dreadful yells, and at the same time began to jump," &c. They quickly began to rush down the hill, firing irregularly as they came on.

They were awaited in grim silence by the little army below, who reserved their fire until the yelling multitude came within 50 paces, when they delivered their volley with cool precision. An attempt was made to surround the military. To prevent this, lord Fingal was ordered to the right, and another party of cavalry to the left. The rebels returned three times with great impetuosity to the charge, and even penetrated so far, as in the last to seize the gun; but before they had time to surround it, the artillery officer applied the match—the discharge levelled a dozen of the assailants, and caused the rest to take to their heels.

The firmness of the Reay fencibles, who kept their line unbroken against the fiercest onsets, and fired with all the cool precision of a field day, soon disconcerted an enemy of which the main efficiency lay in the desperate and overwhelming impulse of their attack. They gave way, and as usual fled in the utmost disorder, casting away their arms and ammunition. The conquerors took 300 horses, a large quantity of provisions, arms, baggage—and recovered eight of the Reay fencibles, who, having been a few days before taken by the rebels, were employed to drill them. There were about ten of the fencibles killed, and about ten or twelve wounded.

A remarkable fact, and perhaps illustrative of the imperfect preparations which had been made for this period of emergency, is to be related. So ill provided were the troops with ammunition, that there was not left a single cartridge after the fight. And consequently there is some reason to doubt what might be the event if the rebels had stood their ground, and even once more repeated their assault. Many prisoners were taken, from whom it was learned that they had intended to plunder Navan in the evening of that day, and then Kells, by which they would have obtained a good deal of ammunition, which lay there slightly guarded; and that, by a previous arrangement, they were afterwards to be joined by large bodies of men from all the surrounding counties.

Many of the fugitives took refuge in the bogs of Meath and Kildare, from which they extended their depredations on every side, plundering, burning, and killing, without discrimination. It was also mentioned that a general massacre of all who had not joined the rebels, was part of their plan, and that the assassination of the earl of Fingal, whose courage and activity had annoyed them, was to be the signal for this part of their design.

On the 24th, a proclamation was issued to the army, and a notice from the lord mayor and corporation, by which the insurrection act was put in force in the "county of the city of Dublin." By this the inhabitants were required to keep within their dwellings, from sunset to sunrise.

A very strong address to the peasantry, from the Roman Catholic aristocracy, the bishops, the president, professors and students of Maynooth was printed and circulated. We shall here extract so much as may clearly show its purport. It was addressed "To such of the deluded people, now in rebellion against his majesty's government in this kingdom, as profess the Roman Catholic religion."

After stating it to be their duty to remonstrate, they say, "They apprehend with equal horror and concern, that such deluded men, in addition to the crime committed against the allegiance which they owe to his majesty, have, in some instances, attempted to give to their designs a colour of zeal for the religion which they profess. The undersigned profess, equally with them, the Roman catholic religion; some of them are bishops of that persuasion; others are heads of the leading families who profess that religion; and others are men of the same persuasion, who, by an honourable industry, have, under the constitution now sought to be subverted, raised themselves to a situation which affords them, in the most extensive sense, all the comforts



of life." The address then proceeds, in strong terms, to give the proper advice which the occasion required, and having well pointed out the consequences of rebellion, proceeds to suggest, that it would also "throw on the religion of which they [the rebels] profess to be advocates, the most indelible stain." It then submits for their consideration, whether their bishops and ancient aristocracy were not more likely to consider the true honour and interests of their religion, than "a set of desperate and profligate men," who had availed themselves of their ignorance to work them to their own bad ends. It adds, "at all events, the undersigned feel themselves bound to rescue their names, and, as far as in them lies, the religion they profess, from the ignominy which each would incur, from an appearance of acquiescence in such criminal and irreligious conduct," &c., &c. This address, eminently adapted to convey a sane impression, if such were possible, was signed by the earl of Fingal, most of the Roman catholic nobility and gentry, and thirty-two bishops, or dignified ecclesiastics, of the same persuasion. It was mentioned that the want of time prevented any more signatures.

We now proceed to relate the further progress of these calamitous events, and to state the disturbances in the county of Wexford.

A fierce attack having been made on the house of Mr Buckey of Rockspring, it was burned to the ground. An express being sent to lord Mountnorris, he came at the head of his yeomen, with a detachment from a neighbouring corps of yeomanry. In the haste, a small advanced guard advanced unfortunately too far, and meeting the rebels, attacked them. Two gentlemen, lieutenant Buckey and Mr Donovan, were killed, and their companions forced to retire. Before the main party could come up, the rebels vented their fury on the bodies of the two gentlemen, which they mangled in a most brutal and savage manner. It was nearly an hour before the main party came up, when the rebels were vigorously charged, leaving about forty dead.

But while the country was defended by small detachments of militia, the rebels were collecting from every quarter, and, being long prepared, were enabled to bring to bear such resources as they possessed, with more celerity than the resources of the government could be rendered effectual; and, consequently, some reverses were to be necessarily experienced, before affairs could receive a decided turn. From the 24th to the end of the month of May, there continued to come in accounts from every part of the kingdom, of smart encounters, of which the event was various; though generally in favour of the king's forces, which were mostly engaged against odds of ten to one, in point of numbers. In some few cases, however, errors were committed, from which the results were unfortunate; though, happily, on a scale too small to affect the event of the struggle. One of these disasters took place in the county of Wexford, where the rebels were assembled in great force, and, as we are led to infer from the different accounts, better armed and disciplined than in most other quarters. An account came into Wexford on the 27th, that they were posted near the hill of Oulard, and that they were burning the houses of the protestants all around their position. Lieutenant-colonel Foote, with

major Lombard and other officers, marched to attack them with one hundred of the North Cork militia. The result was most unfortunate; they were completely surrounded and cut to pieces: the colonel and two privates alone escaped to tell the disastrous story. The rebels were, on this occasion, full forty to one; and it is also probable that the militia were fatigued after a march of ten miles. Colonel Foote had given his opinion against an attack, but the major urged it so strenuously that he gave way. The first step taken was an attempt to irritate the rebels, in order to draw them down from their position; but this was unsuccessful. The major then urged an assault upon the hill, insisting upon the assumption that they would fly at the approach of the soldiers. To make the matter worse, a movement was commanded for the purpose of preventing their retreat; and great numbers of the rebels, who were actually turning from the encounter, immediately returned when they saw a party of yeomanry horse sent round the hill to intercept them. The North Cork men charged up the hill; the rebels poured down to meet them; but great numbers also lay down in the ditches, to let them pass. And they had but time to fire two volleys, when they were hemmed in on every side, so suddenly, and so closely, that all use of their arms was out of the question. The rebel accounts of this affair are not quite reconcilable with probability. One fact very clearly proves that it was no trial of arms—the rebels had but five killed and two wounded. Comparing this with the generality of such encounters, it is plain the militia made no efficient resistance. The rebels thus obtained the arms and fifty-seven rounds of ball cartridge from each soldier; and what was much more, a strong accession of confidence in themselves. Great alarm and excitement was produced in Wexford, and the town was in a ferment of terror and fury. On this occasion the rebels had been commanded by a priest named Murphy, whose name still occupies a distinguished place in the recollections of that time. It was one of the features of that rebellion, that the leaders were, in many instances, reluctantly compelled to the part they acted,—and none were so much exposed to this constraint as the priests. Murphy was, we have reason to believe, an ignorant fanatic; but it would be very unjust not to recollect, that several of his brethren who were reduced to the same afflicting necessity, exerted themselves, on every occasion, to repress the hostilities of their followers, and were often, at some risk to themselves, the means of saving the lives of those who fell into their hands.

The fury of the rebels in the county of Wexford, as in some other localities, was additionally excited by numerous instances of a resistance as irregular and very much marked by the same conduct as their own. The farmers, in many places, moved not only by alarm, but by a very natural feeling of resentment, entered into armed associations, and had recourse to the dangerous and impolitic expedient of retaliation. With fear and anger, suspicion rose; and every hamlet was disorganized by these wretched passions and the courses they engender.

Encouraged by the slaughter at Oulart mountain, the rebels in increased numbers proceeded to attack Enniscorthy. We have not

been enabled to reconcile completely the accounts of this affair. We shall, however, adopt from all, such details as carry the appearance of truth. At Camolin, the rebels added considerably to their fire-arms, by seizing a large supply sent by lord Mountnorris for the use of his tenantry. Having thus about 800 musquets, they advanced to the number of 7000 men, until they came in sight of Enniscorthy, about mid-day.

In Enniscorthy there was a mixed force of three hundred men, composed of yeomanry and volunteers, consisting of the protestant inhabitants. But there existed unfortunately a strong party of disaffected inhabitants, whose proceedings were more fatal than the power of the enemy.

The rebels began by setting fire to some houses with the design to draw the garrison out. On consulting, the captains of the several corps agreed that it was impossible with their small force to defend the numerous avenues to the town; and captains Pounden and Cornock, led their men out to meet the approach of the rebels. When they approached within 400 yards, the rebels halted, and sent out large bodies of people on either side, with a view to surround the yeomanry, and by moving in upon their flanks intercept them from the town, which they would thus be also enabled to enter by all the different approaches. When they had thus extended themselves, they began by driving a great number of horses on the road against the yeomen, to throw them into disorder, and then discharged a volley from their whole front. By this, lieutenants Hant and Pounden were mortally wounded, and captain Cornock slightly; several of their men were also killed or wounded. The rebels' fire was returned with still greater effect. The firing now continued on both sides for some minutes, and an officer who was present, observed, that he had never seen a heavier or better directed fire than came on that occasion from the rebels.

As the rebels poured in their hot fire, they advanced, closing in on either side. The yeomen retreated towards the gate from which they had come out, and sent a message to captain Shower, who commanded a company of the North Cork militia, and a small detachment of cavalry commanded by captain Richards, to come to their aid. He did so; but seeing that—as they blocked up the road, and thus intercepted his fire—no effective aid could be given, he retired to his station, which was also menaced. The rebels were actually making their way to the river Slaney, to cross it and enter from that side. At that point several attacks were made and repulsed with some loss, and great slaughter of the rebels.

The rebels were too numerous to permit the yeomen to keep together; they were pouring in on every side, and it was evident would soon fill the town, and be enabled to attack them on every side. To prevent this, the yeomen divided, and in small parties met the rebels at the different inlets to the town, in which they slew many, and were fast driving them back; but the towns-people began to fire upon these brave fellows, and when this had not the effect of making them give way, they set fire to several houses, so that three or four streets were soon in flames. Nevertheless, the rebels were, after



a sharp contest, repelled at every point; though, unfortunately, it was only for the moment.

In the mean time, other large parties were endeavouring to cross the Slaney, some distance above the bridge; but having succeeded, they were saluted with a smart fire by the North Cork from the bridge; and with still more effect from the cavalry, who killed many of them with their carabines. The rebels withdrew from the fire, and made another attempt; but in this too they were met and repelled. While this was going on, the other parties of assailants rallied; and, profiting by the dense smoke which filled the town, contrived to make their way unopposed; so that the yeomen did not perceive them until they were fiercely charged, and many of them killed or severely wounded. The conflagration was so violent as to scorch them and singe their fur caps as they fought under a canopy of fire and thick smoke. The conflict was now at the fiercest, and the brave yeomanry retired backward, fighting every step, until they reached a small open space at the market-house. Here they stood firm, and fought with such desperate courage, that the rebels gave way and fled, leaving the place heaped with their dead. The streets were cleared, but it was indeed a barren and dear-bought victory, for the town was burned down, and one-third of its brave defenders were slain. We shall not lengthen this sketch by detailing some farther smart attacks which took place at the river side, where the militia were posted. It will be enough to say, that the assailants were repulsed with considerable slaughter at three different points. The total loss of the rebels was about 500 slain.

At this time, some large bodies of rebels in the county of Kildare submitted to general Lake, without any resistance. They gave up their leaders, and were allowed to separate peaceably to their homes.

Many lesser affairs, which it is needless to describe, took place in different localities. Generally throughout these contests, the rebels made very dexterous and often most judicious arrangements for the reception of their enemy; but it may be remarked that they always gave way at once, unless when their confidence was increased both by overwhelming disparity of numbers, and some clear advantage of position.

When these advantages favoured the rebels, their attacks were singularly impetuous. Without them, the difference was equally remarkable, as they generally gave way quickly, often taking panic, so as to appear as if they had come together to be slaughtered without resistance. Indeed, after several such encounters had taken place, an outcry was raised by the opposition press and the popular party, against attacks, which they contended, were made upon the harmless multitude. We notice this because it has been echoed in some of those popular pamphlets which in this, as in everything else, misrepresent the facts of that time. But, in all these contradictory narrations, there is *too much admission*, and they are unsupported by the accounts of the rebels themselves. We think that some thousands of *peaceful* citizens, with arms in their hands, upon the hill of Tara, or marching upon Enniscorthy, or assembled on the Curragh, would be rather a novel display in human affairs: to wait until some decided

enterprise might ascertain clearly what they intended would be a stretch of benevolent simplicity, for which we are inclined to fancy the government would have met little thanks from the rebels, or praise from the faction which have attacked them for a different conduct. Had the different rebel armies, which were broken and disorganized by a prompt resistance, been allowed to concentrate their masses and their means; the consequence, so far as the government was concerned, would have been the same. But the contest would have been most extensive and ruinous to the entire kingdom; desolation and havoc would, as in 1641, have walked once more their bloody round and depopulated the land. For every rebel who was slain, hundreds would have been massacred; and the government would with better reason be accused of having nursed a rebellion for the more complete and effective subjugation of the kingdom. But this most paltry misrepresentation finds no warrant in the language of the conspirators themselves; nor do we believe that the military spirit of the Irish peasantry would submit to be so stultified.

The raw and half-disciplined militia, and the very mixed yeomanry force to which for a time the defence of the kingdom was mainly trusted, were numerically insufficient. In point of material they were very various and unequal; some of the corps were composed of the bravest and most efficient men; others were comparatively unfit for service. Of this they were themselves aware. It happened in some instances, that an apprehension of inefficiency was allowed to pervade them, instead of the usual military spirit; a sense of enmity, and malignity against an irregular foe grew up, elicited partly by fear, and partly by a natural reciprocity of ill-will—for such was the spirit in which they knew themselves to be regarded—and such were the sentiments likely to be generated by the sense of a latent hostility which lurked in every eye that looked at them. Again, they were acted upon by another strong affection. It is well known how much a sentiment of loyalty enters into the habits of the soldier; they were not opposed to a legitimate enemy but to rebels,—men whose hostility was itself treason, and who stood condemned to death by the law. From these causes a ferocious temper sprung up; and in some instances led to cruelties which never fail to be repeated to the injury of a cause. These were, it may be believed, exaggerated to the utmost, and swelled with a sum of acts in no way to be avoided. But blameable as we must assume them to have been—*because such incidents must have occurred*—in several instances; to say that they provoked the people to violence, is a flippant fallacy.

The peasantry were, as we know, in the first place, inflamed by their own leaders, who, with far different feelings, convinced them that they had much to resent and much to gain. It never, indeed, was any part of their temper to be so affected by such injuries. They can be enthusiasts, fanatics; but they are not malignant—they think little of atrocities moreover. But there are unhappily in rebellion itself, some most unhappy circumstances, which are perhaps worth the serious consideration of governments and legislatures: and we have made these remarks chiefly that we might clear this subject from extraneous matter.

By the first laws of the constitution of all governments, rebellion—that is to say, armed revolts against the existing institutions or government of the state—is necessarily criminal and liable to the punishment of treason. Such it has been, in every age, and in every form of society from which any precedent can be drawn. Nor indeed can a state be rationally conceived to exist without this principle; that rebels are criminals, and liable to the capital penalty awarded by the law of the land. That they were to be regarded in any other light never entered the mind of any one but the philosophers of the revolution, and the visionaries whom their wild speculations had crazed; and the hot-headed poets and orators, who, without much reflection, borrowed from them a vitiated language, by which, without meaning much, they lent a pernicious sanction to the folly of the people. In sober earnest, all but a rebel would agree in this one tenet; and it implies no imputation of any kind to say that this understanding was at that time adopted and acted on, in the fullest extent, by all the subordinate jurisdictions and authorities. The admission of the principle involves, as a consequence, an extra-forensic administration of the executive power in that state of things to which it applies—for, that state is essentially a state of war; though involving some peculiar conditions of an obvious nature. From this it will be at once seen, that much must be delegated to military administration, and much to the discretion of local jurisdictions. Now, though the government may and must exercise a merciful discretion, with regard to large bodies of the peasantry, it is by no means so possible, or so expedient, that a similar discretion should be exercised in detail, by those lesser authorities which are themselves beset with the very dangers against which it is their duty to guard; who are acting on their peril; and whose efficiency must depend on their vigour and decision. Hence the inevitable severities of martial law in proclaimed districts. *So far*, the whole weight of just reproach must entirely fall on those who will lead a blind and ignorant populace into the operation of such hapless necessities. But one of the conditions of human nature itself is abuse of power, which will ever be found to increase as the functionaries to whom it is committed approach nearer to an equality with those over whom it is to be vindicated. Fear, jealousy, and party animosity, are among the strong impulses of inferior persons, and will give their ambiguous character to the stern duty of resistance.

But in the mean time, the sophistry of popular agitation will have operated to impress on the mind of the rebel a totally opposite sentiment. He does not admit that he is a rebel. He conceives the whole right to be on his side, and looks on his antagonists as tyrants, oppressors, and combatants in an unhallowed cause. He persuades himself, and is persuaded that he is at war with a usurping power. From this it arises, that his bitterest animosity is kindled by those acts of justice which proceed upon the degrading notion that he is a traitor. He is made to feel that he fights with a rope about his neck, and he resents it with his whole heart. Real atrocities may be perpetrated under the sanction of the government, by individuals as brutal as himself, and his leaders and advocates will hold them up to the censure of mankind, and they will serve to adorn the pages of



radical historians. They are not to be defended. But they are not the complaints of the rebel; he expects to suffer and is ready to inflict such injuries. He does not much regard consequences, though he considers himself *engaged in lawful war*; and imagines that he should have the equal advantages of the laws of war.

Consequently, he considers that he is bound to retaliate the criminal justice of the government. Such an inference is involved in the error under which he has taken arms; and from these causes arise the greatest evils of rebellion.

We have not space, nor if we had, does it fall within our present duties to discuss the further questions to which this view should lead. They are, we think, worth consideration, though not within the province of history. We have here only to add, that in those considerations, we trace the cause of the dreadful incidents that now began to follow the first outbreaks of rebellion. These were unquestionably heightened much by the infusion of party and sectarian animosity, which had been carefully fermented by the originators of the insurrection. We must now return to the order of our narrative.

The fires of Enniscorthy were seen from Wexford, and communicated terror and resentment to every breast. And soon after arrived the brave defenders and those who remained of the inhabitants, having, about four in the evening, left the burning town, on which it was taken possession of by the rebels, who were watching their departure from Vinegar hill, on which they had formed a camp. Another was at the same time formed at the "Three Rocks," within three miles of Wexford.

In consequence of much mismanagement and some irresolution, the officer commanding in Wexford was induced to evacuate Wexford on the 30th of May. The town was on the same day seized by the rebels, who kept possession of it for three weeks, committing cruelties of every kind without any restraint. Of these we shall give some account further on.

In the mean while many occurrences passed. Of these we shall only give an account of the more remarkable, simply enumerating the rest. The full history of the events of these few weeks would be materials for an ample volume.

On the 26th of May, an attack was made by 1000 rebels on Carlow; but the little garrison was prepared for them, and routed them with a dreadful slaughter.

Major-general Fawcett was on his way from Duncannon Fort with a company of the Meath militia: they were cut off by a large rebel force, and he escaped with difficulty.

In the first week of June, the rebels spread into the Wicklow mountains, and the efforts made to dislodge them led to no less than five very smart engagements, in which about 700 rebels were slain.

On the 5th June, the rebels appeared in great strength, (about 30,000), and well equipped and armed before New Ross. They sent a summons to the town; but the bearer was shot as he approached, by the sentry. This occurred about four in the morning, and in an hour after they came on to the attack. They had adopted the ancient stratagem of driving before them large herds of black cattle, which at the

same time covered the attack, and threw the garrison into some disorder; rushing in among the rear of their horned allies, they had possession of a gun, and were assailing the militia before they had time to regain their order.

The gun was immediately turned against the military; they, however, after a very severe struggle, repulsed the enemy at that point. On this, general Jackson ordered captain Irwine to charge them in the adjacent field. They fled from the dragoons and took refuge in the next field by leaping some very high dykes, over which the dragoons vainly attempted to follow. They similarly escaped from two other charges, and when they were out of their reach, with their fire, killed 26 dragoons with one officer. In the last field, captain Irwine's horse was shot by a twelve-pounder which the rebels were in the act of seizing. He fortunately escaped in their confusion, by an expedient which required some coolness and promptitude. He was lying within a few paces of the rebels, when an artillery horse happening to come by, passed so near that he was enabled to lay hold on one of its traces, and was thus dragged away towards the town into which he escaped.

The rebels having entered the town on the same side in considerable force, set fire to many houses, which when general Johnson perceived, he brought his artillery to bear upon them from several cross lanes, and from the old market-place. The eagerness of the rebels, who evidently relied on their great numerical force, was so excited that they stood a hot cannonade with extraordinary obstinacy; suffering themselves to be swept away in ranks, and still rushing upon the troops over heaps of their dead. It was on this occasion that an incident occurred, which has often been related as a good blunder, but unless upon the assumption of drunkenness, seems hardly credible from the amazing confusion of ideas it implies. A fellow, rushing forward, thrust his hat and wig into the cannon's mouth, shouting at the same time, "Come on, boys, her mouth is stopped,"—he was yet speaking when the discharge of the gun scattered him into fragments. "This fact," says the narrator, "has been verified by the affidavit of a looker-on."

The immediate result of this enthusiasm was the rout of the troops, who fled in disorder over the bridge to the Kilkenny side of the river. But general Johnson followed, led them back and restored the fight. A small body of the troops had kept their ground near the "Three Bullet Gate;" they were about to be attacked by a rebel column which was advancing towards them: to these the general now galloped, and informed them that a re-enforcement was coming up. The assurance kept them to their post, and the general kept his word: a steady fire was once again opened on the rebel column, which was soon broken. General Johnson had, in the mean time taken advantage of the respective positions in which both armies were placed, to cut off the retreat of those who were in the town. He had possession of the gate by which they had entered; and, by lining the ditches and defensible positions, outside, he prevented the possibility of a re-enforcement, so that not one of them escaped. The rest of the rebels were at last broken with great slaughter, and took to flight. It was not

considered safe to pursue them further than the ravine near Corbet Hill. They had fought with the greatest bravery, and left 2500 dead on the field. The general lost 88 rank and file, an ensign, and colonel lord Mountjoy; five officers and 76 men wounded; 54 horses killed, and four missing.

This battle was of critical moment, as it was discovered that a general rising of the populace was arranged to follow the event of the town being won by the rebels. The treasurers of the United Irish, in Waterford, were on the point of sending off their messengers to the south, when the event of the battle prevented them, and disconcerted their arrangement. General Johnson conducted this battle with remarkable skill and activity, facing every danger, and contriving amid much confusion to be present at every point of emergency. He had two horses shot under him, and his escape was considered marvelous by those who witnessed the free exposure of his person through the day. His force was about 1200 militia and troops of the line, with 150 yeomen against 30,000 rebels, about 7000 of which had fire-arms and all pikes. The battle lasted ten hours.

One great error seems to have been committed by the general. Fearing that in the event his soldiers might not have it in their power to distinguish between the rebels and the loyal inhabitants, he gave the strange and inconsiderate order, that the loyal protestants should give up their arms and quit the town—(we must say that we can hardly admit this report): of course those who obeyed this mad order were massacred abroad. Fortunately for themselves and for the general, many disobeyed and were thus enabled in the moment of extremity to give most important assistance. And let us here emphatically record our settled opinion, that there is no duty of obedience to such a requisition. The strict right of self-defence is inalienable, and *cannot* be involved in any law grounded on the true principles of all law. It is one of the ultimate rights. And when by accident those who are compelled by their duty to come in any way into collision with this right, it is at their own peril that their duty must be done. For disarming the subject, there must be ostensible and essential grounds; but when so disarmed, the duty of protecting their lives becomes increased to a first duty. The doubt of general Johnson was an unquestionable ground for some restrictive measure; but his duty was, at all risks to protect those whom he disarmed. And so sacred is the principle, that the person who cannot be efficiently protected, cannot be lawfully disarmed.\*

Among the prisoners taken were many loyalists, who became involved in the confusion: these were saved with great difficulty from the soldiery, infuriated as they were by so much resistance and by the repulses they had met. The soldiers were, however, reduced to order, and they were also kept on the alert by the necessary precautions of defence, as the enemy rallied but a few miles off.

Most unhappily a great many persons of both sexes had been col-

\* As we cannot expand so as to guard against all misconception, we should say that, in cases of apprehended rebellion, it is perfectly lawful to disarm those classes from which it is to be feared. To this, the principle does not apply; it is plain that in such a case, there are those who need no protection.



lected together from the surrounding district by the rebels into the house and barn of a Mr King of Scullabogue, with the intention of keeping them as hostages for the safety of such rebels as might be taken prisoners. But the fury of the battle and the vindictive sense of disappointment and defeat had now full possession of the rebels. They seized on some obvious pretexts for the gratification of a most fiendish spirit of revenge: among these was the circumstance of their messenger having been shot by the sentry in the morning; and there were several occasions when rebels taken in arms had been slain by the soldiers. Not considering that these prisoners were not either enemies or in any way involved in the war, they determined on putting them to death. As there was a guard upon the houses, which had not been engaged in the battle, and were therefore free from the passions by which the fugitives were now actuated, these execrable savages had to force their own guard, who would have protected their helpless charge. The house was forced, and thirty persons butchered in it; the barn then, into which was thronged as many as it could hold, was set fire to, and not one escaped from the flames. The perpetrators of this infernal atrocity were never ascertained.

Before stating the particulars of the main events which followed, we may enumerate some of the numerous lesser affairs which were at the same time taking place in different quarters. Many of these—and they are very numerous—are not now of sufficient interest to detain our narrative. There occurred two very severe, though small actions, on the 7th of June, near Antrim, after which lord O'Neil was killed by a pike wound, in the attempt to reach Antrim with a small party. In the two actions nearly 800 rebels were slain, and about 30 of the king's troops and yeomen.

One gentleman, a Mr M'Cleverty, was carried off by nearly 2000 rebels, who fell out among themselves. Their prisoner conducted himself with so much address, that he converted 1500 of them to loyalty—more in consequence dispersed, and not more than about fifty remained. If true, the incident is singular.

On the 5th of June was fought the battle of Arklow. On the previous day colonel Walpole had attacked a strong post of the rebels on the Slieusbury mountain: he was unfortunately slain in the beginning of the attack, and his corps compelled to retire to Arklow. Gathering confidence from their retreat the rebels determined to make an attack on Arklow. Here there was a strong garrison under the command of general Needham. This officer took up a strong position in front of the barracks. The rebels came on in great force, pouring rapidly on the Coolgrueny road, and joined as they came by a large multitude of people armed with pikes. When they had approached sufficiently within range, the general opened a heavy fire of grape shot, which did considerable execution. They extended themselves, in order to turn his left flank, which was exposed; but were met by a charge from his cavalry, and sent back in disorder. They as usual persisted until they had tried every chance, and were at last routed at every point. Great numbers were slain, and among the rest father Murphy, who was their favourite commander. Their loss was estimated at 1000, by general Needham.

Up to the 11th of June, it is to be observed, the king's troops must be considered as having acted entirely on the defensive. In the proper sense of the word no army had been collected, and no system of regular and connected movements adopted. Though, as we have already said, the government had been in possession of the main facts of the conspiracy, they were not altogether prepared for the spontaneous movement of the peasantry; but seem to have been under the impression that, in seizing the leaders, they had completely frustrated the whole design. Any where but in Ireland, the notion might not be so illusory. Consequently they had thought it a sufficient precaution to strengthen the military posts and garrison towns. They could not indeed well have anticipated a succession of attacks so improvident and rash as were actually made. The events which we have related, apprised them of the error; and, while they communicated serious alarm, infused more vigour into their proceedings; so much that, as quickly as the time permitted, forces more adequate to the emergency were collected and put in motion. Even in the extremity, the factious opposition which would have impeded all their proceedings was not for a moment intermitted. Party-leaders solely intent on the ordinary purposes of faction, availed themselves of the exigency of the moment to embarrass their opponents; and, so far as they might presume, misrepresented every act of the government, and gave encouragement and sanction to every crime and folly of the infatuated populace, by means of those unprincipled and perilous absurdities and consequences which form the staple of democratic eloquence. In the magniloquent language of the popular rhetorician, an insurgent rabble, armed against the peace, the worth, honesty, and respectability of the country, was dignified as the suffering people; and the most urgently necessary and scarcely adequate steps taken to meet and repress the evil, were described as the extreme of despotic cruelty. The consequence in which our narrative is now mainly involved, was this, that the Irish administration was thereby placed under very considerable disadvantages. The liberals of that day were far stronger than they have been since, (until the last twenty years at least,) and in England where Irish affairs have never been rightly comprehended, they produced strong impressions. It could not be sufficiently understood that in some respects their representations were *wholly false*, and in others they did not understand what they were speaking of. The very best of them were but orators—men who would have declaimed about *Magna charta*, *Habeas corpus*, and the liberty of the press, if they were transported to the south sea islands. So far as such men could influence, it was not easy to meet the prejudices they raised; and these men were too able in their own popular sphere; too brilliant; too amiable; and some of them too respectable, not to have great influence. And let it be called to mind, that there are occasions when the only strict line of duty must unhappily be such as to offend the more generous and softer sensibilities of human nature. We trust therefore that in these strictures, nothing we have said may receive a construction offensive to the memory of those illustrious men to whom they are confessedly intended to apply.

We shall now endeavour to present an outline of the main proceed-

ings which are to be considered as terminating this disastrous insurrection. During the period thus marked out, there still continued a scattered war from post to post, of which the incidents, though remarkable enough, cannot be considered to bear much on the result. The battle of Ballinahinch may be selected for the fierceness with which it was fought, and the pacific dispositions it seems to have imparted to the rebels. These were posted very strongly near the town of Ballinahinch, on the 10th of June—when major general Nugent advanced against them. Some skilful manœuvres compelled them to change their position. They were attacked a little after daybreak next morning—the general so ordering his attack that in their retreat the rebels might be forced to the mountains, and thus save the inhabitants of the surrounding country. They were attacked in two different directions. In both they made the most determined resistance and were repulsed—they made repeated stands, and endeavoured to seize the guns; but were at last forced to fly in all directions open to them. Their number was computed to be about 20,000, their loss 400. On the king's side there were five rank-and-file killed, and an officer; fourteen, and one officer, wounded. A few days after, this party of rebels sent to apply for pardon to major general Nugent, offering to surrender their arms and ammunition. The general agreed to accept their submission, on the condition that they should deliver up their leader and principal instigators. Their general, a person of the name of Munro, was taken on the morning of the 15th; he was immediately tried by a court martial, and suffered the penalty of his crimes. Among the documents produced on his trial was the following pithy proclamation.

“Not to pay any rent to the *disaffected* landlords, and the inhabitants of the county of Down.

“Headquarters, Ballinahinch, 12th June, 1798.”

An attack on Kilbeggan brought on a sharp engagement, in which a party of four thousand rebels were defeated by a very small force, brought together from different quarters in the hurry of the moment.

There are two main occurrences which more especially require something more of detail,—the battle of Vinegar Hill, and the occupation and relief of Wexford.

Vinegar Hill stands over the town of Enniscorthy, and is nearly twelve miles from the town of Wexford. We have already mentioned, that on their repulse in the town of Enniscorthy, the rebels took a station on Vinegar Hill, where they fixed a camp and were re-enforced by large parties. Here numerous inhabitants, from the surrounding country, who had not succeeded in escaping, were brought up, tried, and put to death, as persons disaffected to the rebel cause. On the top of the hill, their green flag appeared on the ruin of an old windmill.

On the 21st of June, general Lake commenced his arrangements at 7 A.M., to attack this principal stronghold. His plan was to surround the rebels, so as by preventing their escape to obtain a decided surrender, which it was thought would materially contribute to put an end to the rebellion. For this purpose, the general arrangements of the plan were fully adequate; but there were either unfortunate continu-



gencies or errors in the execution, by which the result fell short of what was intended. It has been by some, indeed, attributed to the fear of encountering the desperation of a large force of brave men shut in on every side,—if this were the case, we should not hesitate to brand such a case of failure with a strong term of reproach. But there was a far more honourable reason. The army was, it is well known, in a very low state of discipline, and strongly animated by party passions and vindictive feelings, and their commanders might well have been apprehensive of the consequence which could hardly have failed to occur. The Irish peasantry are subject to a transition from the most frantic valour to the most helpless state of panic; and having fought with almost resistless impetuosity, when they give way, will hardly strike a stroke for life. The commanders of the king's forces knew that the result of the victory would have been a most fearful and deplorable butchery of thousands of those deluded wretches. The fact stated was, that after an hour of firing on both sides, general Needham had not yet arrived to occupy the space left for his force in the chain of positions. The rebels had expended their powder in about an hour and a half, they began themselves to perceive that they were on the point of being surrounded, and with great precipitation rushed towards the open space which was left, and escaped. They were slaughtered to a considerable amount. Several officers were slain of the king's troops, and many severely wounded.

Discouraged by this event, the rebels who held the town of Wexford now proposed to surrender; and it may be allowed that it would have been well if the offer could have been taken; but there were circumstances which rendered it a question of very doubtful policy and prudence. And if it can with truth be alleged, that it would have put an end to the ravages which were then laying desolate so many fair districts; still, it cannot be said on any sure ground, that such a consequence was to be *anticipated*, in a warfare which, on the side of the rebels, was entirely without conduct or apparent discretion. However we may join in stigmatizing the savage temper in which outrages were resisted on many occasions, yet there is a plain truth which can not but be seen—that the kind of peace looked for by the rebels was one as likely to renew and keep alive the spirit of insurrection as to allay it. It was necessary to assert the authority of government, and to make it manifest that those who had misled the ignorant populace, could not be admitted to the privilege of a treaty. Such a false step would have been chorused by the agitators of every age, to a people so apprehensive as the Irish. It would have imparted a prouder post to the rebel, who would have seen and represented the transaction in his own way. The submission of the rebels was in every instance accepted; the offer of the leaders was refused for precisely the same reason that such offers would not be received, and ought not, from any other persons guilty of capital felonies or treasons. Many lives might have at the time perhaps been saved, by a step which was much more likely to perpetuate murder. It will be a hapless hour for Ireland, or for any nation, when the disturber of the people is free from the terrors of justice. The Wexford leaders proposed to lay down their arms and to induce the people to return to their allegiance, provided their

persons and properties should be guaranteed by the officer commanding the king's troops.

The case of the Wexford leaders is indeed very peculiar, and cannot be thought of without regret. This will best appear from our brief narrative of the events in Wexford, during the three weeks in which it was occupied by the rebels.

In the town of Wexford, the horrors of the French Revolution were equalled and surpassed. It was shown on a small scale to what rebellion among the lower orders must ever lead. For though much humanity was called forth, there were not wanting execrable passions, and monsters in human shape, to govern (and such will always take the lead) circumstances. After the fight of Enniscorthy, the streets of Wexford were filled with a terrified crowd of every rank; the gentry of the surrounding country with their wives and families, driven from their homes, came mingled with their humble neighbours to the town as to a place of refuge. The inhabitants of the town, justly distrusting the means of defence, had crowded into the vessels which were lying in the harbour, in the delusive hope of thus escaping from the horrors which they too truly anticipated. At first, there was some hope that at least a struggle would be made; and some preparations were commenced by taking precautions against the firing of the houses, by means of which the rebels had hitherto endeavoured to make good their entrance. Orders were given to put out all fires, and the roofs were stripped from thatched houses. But when the garrison held a council, it was decided that any attempt to defend the town would be quite unavailing. It was next resolved to endeavour to make terms with the rebels, and surrender the town on their pledge to preserve the inhabitants from injury. Mr Richards and Doctor Jacobs were commissioned for this purpose, and the terms were accepted. All the troops, and such of the yeomen as were unmarried, marched out and made their way to Duncannon Fort.

The rebels were not slow to take possession. Every effort was made by the leaders to preserve order; but their savage followers were utterly incapable of any discipline or subordination but the tumultuary obedience of the fray. For a few days, the fierce and humoursome crowd lay like some element of combustion—with difficulty withheld from acts of violence, by leaders whom they kept in subjection. But their entire demeanour was such as to convey unuttered horrors and atrocities, and to fill the timorous crowd that now lay at their mercy with terror. The same dark and gloomy apprehensions extended to the crowds of fugitives on board the shipping—for when the white flag was seen floating over the town, it was answered by the ships, which, with the exception of two, now showed themselves to be in collusion with the rebels, by hoisting the same flag. Their fear-struck inmates were now landed, seized upon, and exposed to all insults and abuses. The rebels crowded the streets; they are described by Mr Charles Jackson, one of the sufferers on the occasion here described. He was just landed from one of the ships, when “one of the captains (of the name of Furlong) came up to me, and asked me if I belonged to the town, and whether I had any arms? I told him that at the house where I had lived, I had a musket. He

bid me follow him, and give it up. We passed through crowds of the rebels, who were in the most disorderly state without the least appearance of discipline. They had no kind of uniform, but were most of them in the dress of labourers, with white bands round their hats, and green cockades, being the only marks by which they could be distinguished. It was impossible for a mob to be more wild and frantic—many of them seemed to be in a state of intoxication.”\* This person was severely handled, and saved with difficulty from the hands of these cut-throats—made several escapes, which ended by his being lodged in Wexford gaol, with two hundred and fifty Protestants. The scenes to which he was witness for several following days, have thus obtained a record. A few passages will sufficiently convey the whole. On the evening of the first day of his incarceration, was the commencement of scenes which outgo in atrocity the horrible gaol deliveries of Robespierre. “A fellow of the name of Dick, who had formerly been a shoe-black in the town, but now was raised by the rebels to the rank of captain, came into the gaol and bid us prepare our souls for death; for that all of us, except such as on examination he should release, would be put to death at twelve o’clock that night. The manner of his examining was twofold; first politically, and then religiously. The form of his political examination was this. Q. Are you straight? A. I am. Q. How straight? A. As straight as a rush. Q. Go on then? A. In truth, in unity, and in liberty. Q. What have you got in your hand? A. A green bough. Q. Where did it first grow? A. In America. Q. Where did it bud? A. In France. Q. Where are you going to plant it? A. In the crown of Great Britain.” These questions and answers, which were a part of the United Irishmen’s Catechism, are very instructive. They contain, in a few significant words, the true history of the rebellion, from the mouths of the rebels themselves. They were answered by six, who were in consequence acquitted of loyalty, and liberated from the doom which now awaited the remainder. A few more days their fate was suspended by the efforts of a few leading men. Some murders were committed, and the cowardice of Jackson exposed him to the infamous office of being their executioner on one of those occasions.

On the 20th of June, there was a call for a large part of the rebel garrison, to re-enforce their camp at the Three Rocks, where an attack was expected from the troops under the command of general Moore.† This was fatal to the unfortunate prisoners. The brave and humane men who had hitherto preserved some order, with the better conditioned portion of their forces, were thus drawn away—the dregs of a disorderly rabble remained behind, with a monster of the name of Dixon at their head. The very name of mercy now left the devoted town; and this barbarian, to preserve enough of form to give a zest to cruelty, thought it necessary to institute a mock trial. The offer of pardon was made to Jackson and some other detestable poltroons, to be witnesses against their fellow-prisoners. They satisfied themselves with the consideration, that their evidence was but a form, and

\* Narrative of Mr Jackson.

† Afterwards the illustrious General Sir John Moore.



in their fear, overlooked the baseness of the office: they took on them the character of Orangemen, and as such, denounced all the rest. These were now taken in parties of from eighteen to twenty, and murdered on the bridge of Wexford, with the most revolting circumstances of cruelty. Dixon had intended that the slaughters should be perpetrated in the jail; but his wife, worthy of her husband, overruled, and insisted that the people should not be so cheated of the pleasant sight. This incident sounds as a horrible extravagance; yet all accounts clearly indicate that such was the spirit in which these deeds of death were done and looked upon. One by one, the victims were led up to a mock tribunal, and the question was asked if any one could tell of any good they had ever done, to save their lives. Silence gave the only signal, and all the varieties and combinations of shooting, piking, and drowning, gratified the laughing and cheering crowd. The pusillanimous Jackson was himself included among the condemned; fortunately for him, at the end of a day of cold slaughter, after eighty-one had been led out by droves to the same bloody theatre, seventeen more, of which he was one, were led forth. "The blood of those who had been already executed on this spot, (eighty-one in number,) had more than stained—it streamed upon the ground about us." The murderers proceeded with savage deliberation—it was fortunate for many of the victims: they had despatched three, and were yet torturing the fourth, when Philip Roche entered the town in great haste, and called out to beat to arms, and that Vinegar Hill was beset. The slaughter ceased. The organist, the town bailiff, and Jackson, were on their knees for death—they were hurried back to jail—and soon after the royal forces entered the town.

We forbear from prolonging our narrative, with the recital of the numerous horrors of the same character, of which records are still preserved. There is one reason, and but one, why such representations ought to be preserved; but that is indeed, not a slight one—they are the necessary results of popular violence when it is suffered to take head. And the most objectionable means by which this can be resisted are in comparison slight indeed. Injustice ought not to be the resource: it ought not to be required. But resistance must be resorted to, and this will always be enough to exasperate when it is not enough to repress. The rebellion was, until the last, met with insufficient means; the matter was left too long in doubt, and fanaticism was allowed to rise to the boiling point. Above all, the desultory struggles which were allowed to carry war into every house, created animosity between classes—the protestant farmers, assailed in the home of all their most pervading and deepest affections, could not fail to enter with their passions into the strife. Those who only think of the war of nations, are not quite aware of the difference occasioned by the personal resentments of the adversaries.

It now only remains to offer some general remarks on the incidents of this insurrection. We have already traced many of the calamities it inflicted on the country, to the insufficient and desultory resistance of the government, and shown how (chiefly from the presumptuous misstatements of popular politicians) the danger was underrated. The rebels on their part were equally destitute of council and common

centre of action: deprived of all the plotting heads which had first given impulse to the movement, they were led by shrewd and intelligent but unskilful persons, who acquired the ascendancy among them, more from their personal qualifications, or their previous official authority, than from either the talent, or even the will to lead them to the field. In most cases, the priest preserved the authority of his station, only taking a post, which he was scarcely permitted to refuse, and in which he was in some measure enabled to soften the horror and atrocity of his flagitious followers. In some instances, gentlemen were compelled to save their lives by accepting of the command: of this we shall have a melancholy instance to relate. The commander, whatever was his rank, could exercise but a restricted power: the ablest and most popular of the leaders, father Philip Roche, was frequently compelled to use the most complicated expedients to rescue the prisoner from his fate. This unfortunate person demands also some separate notice.

The encampments of the rebel armies were the repositories of the entire plunder of the surrounding country—their tents were covered with expensive carpets and filled with costly furniture of every portable kind—droves of cattle, slaughtered with lavish prodigality, feasted the crowd, and tainted the air around them. This, together with the contamination arising from the heaps of human slaughter, which lay unburied in many places, would have brought on a plague, had the rebellion continued much longer in that hot summer.

By the concentration of the forces on either side, the battles had, after the 20th, become more decided. And from the general prevalence of victory on the loyal side, the spirit of the people became subdued. As Mr Tone observed, they were crushed, and universally began to show a disposition to return to their allegiance. This consideration suggested a change of policy; among the measures which the emergency of the previous state of affairs had appeared to demand, it had been thought it might be expedient to send over a military viceroy—it was probably in compliance with the earnest urgency of the popular party, and under impressions made by their strong assertions, that a popular selection was now made in the person of lord Cornwallis. To this change, popular historians attribute most inconsiderately the change of measures which followed, but which was entirely due to the complete change of the popular spirit. This is quite above all question; the uniform policy in every instance observed through the rebellion had been to accept the submission of the people, and only to insist on the surrender of arms and leaders; and less than this would have been insanity. But resistance was now virtually at an end, and the justifiable fears of a few individuals, alone kept up the expiring embers of the fire. To say, that under such circumstances, lord Camden would have continued a course of unresisted hostility, is nothing better than simple nonsense. And it is amply illustrated by the fact, that no severity which policy appears to have required was omitted by his successor.

Once more, too, because it is important, we must distinctly state that we have not adverted to the atrocities committed by the rebels in the spirit of reproach; as we entirely repudiate the exaggerated allegations of cruelties committed on the loyal side, so far as any

reproach to the administration has been their drift: a little common observation ought to have made it plain, that they were on both sides the common workings of those base elements of human nature, which any cause, however good or evil, will rouse into activity in all popular strivings. On both sides, it is to be presumed, there were low minds, bigotry, and vindictive animosity. But if we were to cast a strict balance between the delinquents of either party, we would be inclined to prefer to make allowance for those who had for their excuse that their lives and homes, and all that was dear to them, were threatened by a savage populace.

As to the real amount of the cruelties charged against certain individuals, we ought to add, that we have only admitted them because we have not distinctly the means or the space to cross-examine the evidence. But it would be unpardonable weakness to dismiss the subject without stating our impression, that the whole has been founded on a few incidents by the lying recrimination of faction. Our reason is mainly this, that we have so uniformly found a mixed tissue of misrepresentation and fallacy in the entire of the history of the ten years from 1790 to 1800; that unless when it is confirmed by the direct admissions of their most authoritative adversaries, it must be received with doubt.

The government of lord Camden and his advisers was no more severe than circumstances rendered imperative and indispensable. There was no alternative but revolution—an event which would have extended the scenes of Wexford and Gorey through every city and town in Ireland. They who think otherwise, are imposed upon by the ridiculous generalities in which they allow their tongues and pens to deal. Lord Clare, in his able and unanswerable speech in reply to the good and amiable romancing of the earl of Moira, made the assertion that the government attacked so unfairly, had been one of conciliation. This, we trust, has been very clearly proved; and it is a strong additional proof, that after a change of administration—which has been praised as a change of measures—from harshness to lenity, it was still considered by the mild policy of lord Cornwallis, necessary that some very severe examples should be made. In reality, there was no change of policy. The entire suppression of the rebellion was followed by trials and executions which cannot be justified on the ground taken by the popular historians: but which, on the recognised laws of sound policy and justice, need no defence.

But the eyes of the deluded multitude had been momentarily torn open: the fatal vapours which had been raised around them had been dispelled by the thunders of civil war. They were returning to their homes, and surrendering their arms—an entire change had come upon them—and this demanded and produced a change of policy as a matter of course. A general amnesty was proclaimed; a few months sooner, it would have been laughed at; it was received as a mercy. The French invasion came too late for its design. We shall return to it, and relate it as a separate incident.

The leaders of the United Irishmen, who had fortunately been secured, (as already related,) received also the benefits and advantages extended to their duped followers. They were reprieved from the legal



penalty of their crime on certain conditions. Of these, and of the questions to which they gave rise, we have already made some mention: but as we shall be compelled to dwell upon them in another memoir, we shall omit them here.

A question may arise in the reader's mind, as to the degree in which the crime and error here so largely discussed can be imputed to the gentry or the priesthood of the Romish church. Their gentry and aristocracy are clear even of imputation. With the clergy it is somewhat different; there were some strong appearances against them. Of those inferences which some have drawn from the principles and policy of the Church of Rome, we shall not need to speak: for on the immediate occasion out of which our present remarks arise, they are not applicable. The point to be considered, is simply as to the facts: to some extent it is certain that the people were actually commanded by their priests. Now, what the priests might do as servants of their church, if their own sense of duty imposed it, we do not say: but we are clearly of opinion, that such at that time was not the moving consideration. Setting aside the peculiar vices of individual temper and intellect, which in some cases had unquestionable weight, we think that the part taken by the clergy was then involuntary. The peasantry, when concentrated and elevated by the acquisition of an imaginary power, have ever been thoroughly intolerant of neutrality: they will not admit the slightest question of their more than despotic control—and not to take part with them, heart and hand, is to be against them. This is the common character of the populace of all nations; for it is that of mere undisciplined human nature; but it is the spirit itself of the Celtic races. Not to pursue refinements—we are clearly of opinion, looking to a wide compass of details, that the clergy were but as feathers on the stream, carried along by a power and by passions over which they had no control. So far, indeed, is rendered in some degree apparent, by the straits to which some of them were driven in their efforts to save the lives of protestants, who had the ill fortune to fall into the hands of the miscreants who surrounded them.

The earl of Clare was the most prominent, as he was the ablest advocate for the legislative union; and it is under his memoir that we should state its history. But as we have not yet concluded the memoirs of those persons whose lives are interwoven with the preceding events, we shall avoid much inconvenient repetition, by postponing this topic to a future memoir.

We should apologize for entering so very little into the personal history of lord Clare; but that we feel the course we have taken, while it fulfils the main object of this work, which is to give the fullest outline of the history of his time, is also the most effective means of executing the office of a biographer to one whose name and memory are wholly committed in the view which may be taken of that history. Whatever may have been his lordship's deserts, they were of a description which in Ireland could never be otherwise than unpopular. In this country, in which all the varied causes which retard national progress and promote disorder seem to have met together and occupied the soil until they have become native to it, the laurels of renown have been reserved for the flatterers and instigators of an uncivilized

democracy: and it is now much to perform, or even to dare, to clear in some degree the briars and brambles which the basest and most audacious slander, and prejudices the narrowest, have planted over the monuments of men like John Fitzgibbon, earl of Clare.

This nobleman died in 1802. His character may be briefly summed. His intellect was rapid, clear, and full of power; but its power seems to have more consisted in sagacity and sound common sense, than in depth or extraordinary comprehensiveness—still, for mere intellect, he may be placed at the head of the eminent Irishmen, among whom he was an actor. He was still more eminently above these illustrious persons in the moral features of his character: with profound, but rough and masculine strength of feeling, he was endowed with a degree of moral firmness, and a superiority to popular influences, rarely belonging to public men. Without the high and chivalric scorn which for a season impelled Grattan to shake off the base dictation of the rabble—or the comprehensive enthusiasm which raised the flight of Burke far above it: lord Clare pursued a steady course under the guidance of settled principle, and wholly impassive to the influences of opinions and passions in which he had no participation, and for which he entertained no respect. Of such a character, he probably possessed the infirmities. Notwithstanding the numerous general charges against him, it is very curiously remarkable, that when we come to distinct statements, either the conduct imputed to him is wholly imaginary, or the pardonable result of exceeding provocation, from the arrogance and petulance of the complaining person. And it is still more remarkable, that wherever his individual conduct can be traced, it is most signally characterized by the most active and prompt humanity. Of this, a striking instance will be related in the life of lord Edward Fitzgerald. The escape of Hamilton Rowan will furnish another; some have been noticed in previous memoirs, and many must pass unnoticed. Violently counteracted and resisted, he was perhaps not so nice as more temperate times would have required and allowed of in his resistance. Assailed with opprobrious language where he was conscious of right, it is to be inferred that resentment must frequently have been the inmate of his breast. Accustomed to be misrepresented in all things, he must have been the mildest of men if no vindictive spirit was awakened. It was no light provocation to be perpetually goaded with the language of virtuous indignation, by men on whose conduct and opinions he looked down with strong censure and scorn; and lastly, when in the course of events he saw the disorders of the kingdom ready to overwhelm all that was worth preserving in a half civilized country, it cannot be doubted that his zeal must have been exasperated to fierceness, and may have been carried beyond the bounds of lenity: this the circumstances required; party itself had gone far beyond the pale of the constitution; but even if this were not true, he would stand justified on common grounds. We cannot see on what grounds a monopoly of violence can be claimed for rebels and assassins, and nothing be allowed for the one who nearly alone in that dreadful time stood firm and unappalled at the post of duty, himself “the object selected eminently for vengeance, by the ferocity of an ensanguined rabble.”

Concerning his private life, we shall conclude with two paragraphs from the hand of one of the most eminent of his contemporaries. "As to his private life, it is well known that the same steadiness which sustained his public conduct, governed his personal attachment. His friendships were sincere and fixed; and although in a character marked by such strength of features, the lineaments of the softer virtues could scarcely be expected to mix; yet they who knew him in the unbendings of his retirement, have often witnessed the genuine indication of their existence, and can fully attest the spontaneous and animated emotions of a latent tenderness, which it seemed as much his study carefully to conceal, as in this age of affected sensibility it is that of others to display. In this, indeed, as in other parts of his conduct, it is to be lamented, that an habitual disgust against all hypocritical appearances had so far wrought upon his mind, as to render him generally anxious to suppress, lest he might be supposed to affect, feelings and qualities the most honourable and endearing. The occasions, however, have not been few, in which, even to the public eye, the milder virtues of his nature broke through this restraint. And if the charities of domestic life be received as evidence of the kindly dispositions of the heart, perhaps in no case can such proofs be adduced, more abundant and convincing.

"In all matters of pecuniary concern, his dealings were directed by a strict and punctual regard to his engagements; and at the same time distinguished by a liberality which, without indulging in those excesses which beget embarrassment and sacrifice independence, manifestly evinced a mind aloof from the sordid love of accumulation. In him, indeed, honesty and liberality can scarcely be said to have claimed the rank of virtues. They required no effort, and could boast no triumph, when a rooted contempt of wealth precluded all means of their counteraction. And it deserves to be remarked, that amongst the numerous calumnies which a vindictive malice has endeavoured to cast upon the fame of this distinguished person, the tongue of slander has never whispered the imputation of a single act of mercenary meanness."\*

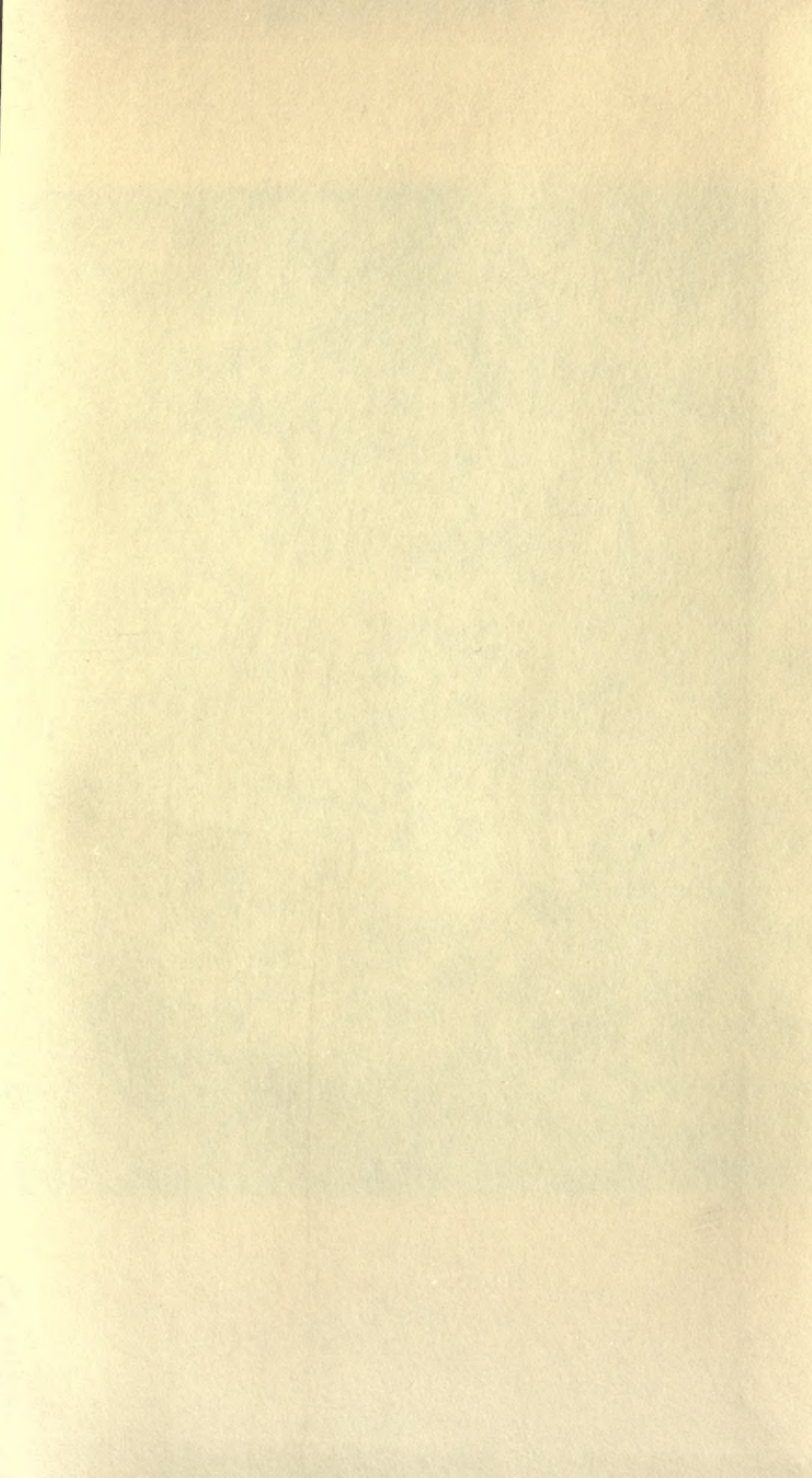
\* Funeral Sermon by Archbishop Magee.

END OF VOLUME FIFTH.

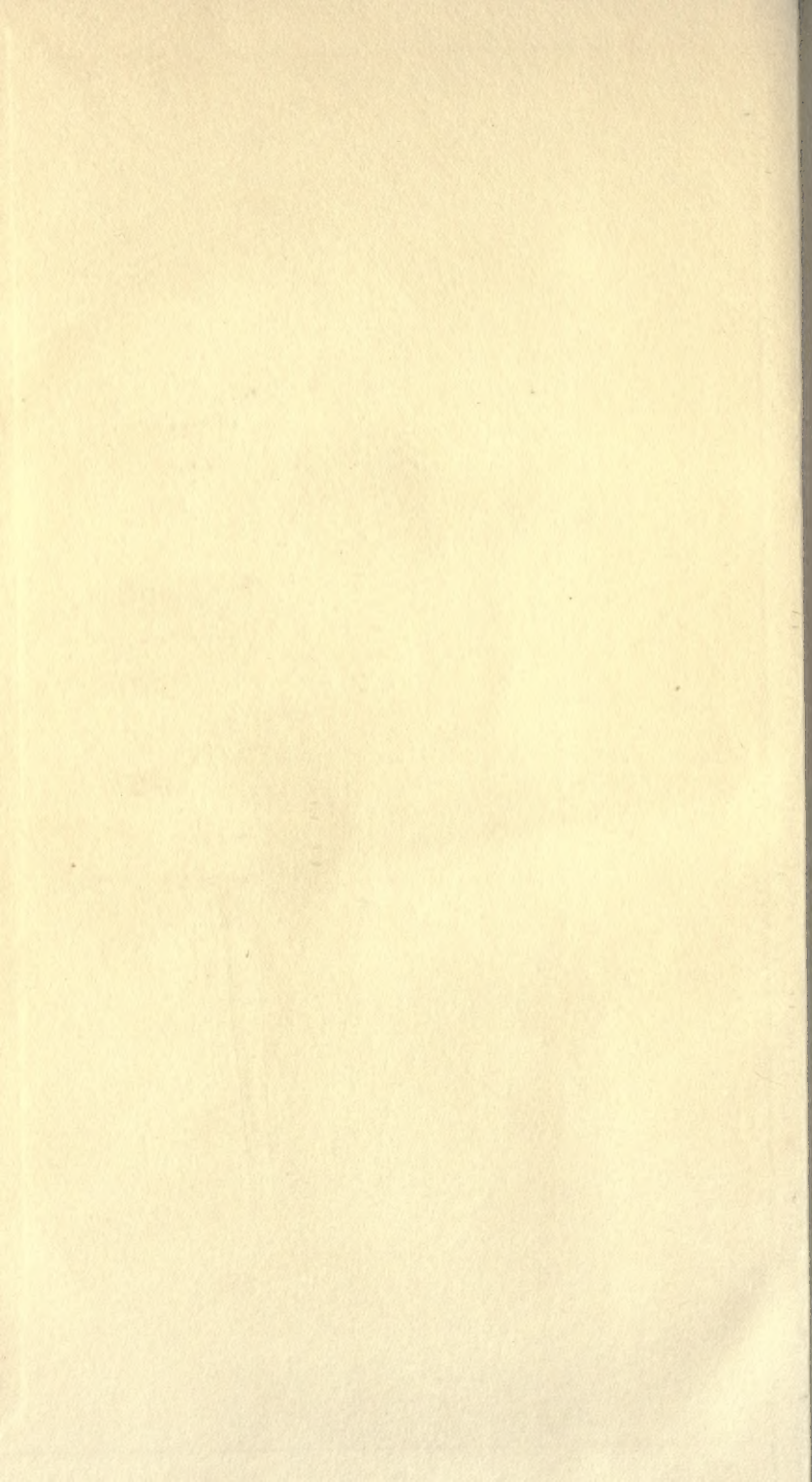












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Wills, James (ed.)  
Lives of illustrious and  
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